

AMBASSADOR WESLEY EGAN

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy

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Q: Today is the 28th of October, 2003. This is an interview with Wesley Egan and its W-E-S-L-E-Y and E-G-A-N. This is being done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training and I'm Charles Stuart Kennedy and you go by Wes?

EGAN: I go by Wes.

Q: All right. Let's start at the beginning. Could you tell me when and where you were born?

EGAN: I was born in Madison, Wisconsin in January of 1946.

Q: Let's start, first let's do your father's side. How about, where did the Egans come from and how did they get to Madison?

EGAN: The Egans are, it's a very common name in New York City and the metropolitan New York area. I come from a long line of New Yorkers on both my mother's and my father's side; all born either in the city or in Flushing in Queens. My father went back to the University of Wisconsin in Madison after the war to finish his undergraduate degree. He and my mother were living in a small apartment about a block off Lake Mendota when I was born.

Q: How about your father's family in New York? What sort of work were they in?

EGAN: My grandfather was a businessman. There were small businessmen on both sides of my family. My grandfather was in the automobile business for many years. My grandfather on my mother's side worked for a large dairy company for most of his life. My parents were the first in their family to go to college.

Q: Your mother was from where?

EGAN: Also born and raised in Flushing.

Q: Her family name?

EGAN: Her maiden name was Skeuse.

Q: How do you spell that?

EGAN: It's an unusual name. S-K-E-U-S-E. Both my parents had German/Irish backgrounds. My mother and father went to Flushing High School and went to St. George's Episcopal Church in Flushing where they met working on the church newspaper. Flushing was a small village in those days.

Q: That was before the, what was it, what about the world's fair?

EGAN: Well, the world's fair was there twice, the first in the late 1930's.

Q: It was '39, I remember.

EGAN: It was there again in Flushing Meadows in 1964. In fact I worked at that fair in 1964 and 1965. My mother was born in 1918. My father was born in 1919. So, by 1939 they would have been in their early '20s and I'm sure went to that fair.

Q: Oh, yes. Well, now, did your father get involved in World War II?

EGAN: Yes he did. He was a pilot. He was a bomber pilot in the Second World War. When the United States entered the war, he signed up and was trained as a pilot in El Paso and Tucson. In those days military spouses didn't count for much as far as the armed forces were concerned. There were no provisions made for housing or travel or anything else, so my mother got on a train in New York City and followed my dad to El Paso and rented a room in a boarding house on Montana Avenue with two other women that she'd never met whose husbands were also being trained. She did the same thing in Tucson. When my dad went overseas, she went back to New York to wait for him. When he came out of the service at the end of the war, they went back to Madison for him to finish his undergraduate degree.

Q: Was he either in Italy or England?

EGAN: He was in North Africa.

Q: North Africa.

EGAN: He was based in Rabat and then Benghazi and for a little with the British east of Cairo on the Suez Canal. For their 50th wedding anniversary, we brought them back to Cairo. My father had not been there in 45 years. We tried to find the old RAF base but couldn't. He flew mostly over Corsica and Sardinia. A lot of those men did not come back. He was to have been part of that famous raid on the oil fields.

Q: It was Romania.

EGAN: Romania, that's right, but he came down with sand fly fever two days before and was grounded. Otherwise he would have been on that raid, but he came back to the States in probably 1945 and went back to Madison with my mother. I was born in January of the next year.

Q: What fields were your parents studying at Madison?

EGAN: My father did his undergraduate degree in dramatic arts. Madison was a real hub of young actors, set designers, and playwrights in those days. James Daley was part of that crowd and my father was very active in the theater community in Madison.

Q: Did he continue this when he came back?

EGAN: Well, his intention was to get his undergraduate degree in dramatic arts and then get his masters degree with Paul Green at the Playmakers Theater at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Paul Green went on to write several of those great outdoor epics, The Lost Colony and things that have played in North Carolina and elsewhere. He did all the course work, but he never wrote his thesis. Instead he went to Kent State University in Ohio to teach dramatic arts. He was teaching at Kent when the Korean War broke out. He was called back in to the air force at the time of Korea and never left. He retired in the 1974 after 37 years as an air force pilot.

Q: How about your mother?

EGAN: My mother went to Hunter College in New York City but only for two years. She didn't finish for financial reasons and went to work in New York for AT&T. She never went back to school.

Q: Did you have brothers and sisters?

EGAN: I have a younger brother born in Ohio in the early '50s, no sisters. I have a first cousin, the son of my father's brother who was killed in the Second World War and whose wife died in the early '50s, who lived with us as a brother. He's six years older and my younger brother is six years younger.

Q: You came out of New York, how Catholic was your family? How Catholic did you grow up?

EGAN: Well, I didn't grow up Catholic at all. Because of the way my name is spelled, I should be a Catholic, but my grandfather, who was a Roman Catholic, married a Lutheran and was promptly disowned by his family. His sister did not speak to him for I think 50 years. He was ostracized and the compromise he and my grandmother made was to join the Episcopal Church. So I was raised as an Episcopalian.

Q: When you sort of remember, when you grew up you were where at Kent State?

EGAN: My oldest memories are of Chapel Hill, North Carolina. I don't think I could have been more than about three when my father was doing his graduate work at the University. We went to Tripoli, Libya in 1952. My dad was assigned to Wheelus Field. His next assignment was Mitchell Field on Long Island. I then have very strong memories from elementary school through the ninth grade living on the North Shore of Long Island. In 1960 we moved to West Texas when my Dad made the transition from the Tactical Air Command to SAC [Strategic Air Command] at Dyess Air Force Base in Abilene. It was a big base in those days. I think it's a B1 base now, but he was flying C141s. In the early '60s he was assigned to Bangkok for about a year and a half flying counter insurgency groups in northern Thailand. Bangkok became one of his favorite cities in the world. He came back from Thailand in 1964 and was assigned to the faculty of the Air War College at Maxwell Field in Montgomery, Alabama. He was later in charge of the airborne command post at the Pentagon. He arranged his last active duty assignment as the Air Force ROTC Commandant and the Director of the Curriculum of Peace, War and Defense at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill and retired in '74.

Q: Going back, since you jumped all over the place, let's talk about, rather than, what do you recall, as a kid? How did you grow up? Was this a family that sat around the dinner table or talked about world events?

EGAN: It was probably a slightly odd mix of the theater crowd and a house full of books related to the theater, dramatic arts, set design, the classics and history. I think once or twice he was tempted to work in the theater in New York, but never did. His Air Force identity and his dramatic arts background made for pretty lively dinner table conversations on current events, public policy, George Bernard Shaw, the last Hallmark Hall of Fame production, he had a friend who was in casting for Hallmark, airplanes, etc.

Q: You as an air force kid, could you identify every airplane in the stable?

EGAN: Well, I couldn't, but my son can. Pretty much. We only lived on an air base once and that was in West Texas. It was important to my folks to have a life, an intellectual life and social life, outside the air force. They always made an effort, I'm sure at some financial expense, not to live in whatever military housing might be available. I did spend a lot of time on the flight line with my dad sitting around waiting for them to take off and come back, and most of my friends were the sons and daughters of pilots. In those days, if you weren't a pilot, you weren't really in the Air Force. These were all men who loved to fly and who lived to fly and I think until his death my father still felt that way about time in the air. Yes, I was an air force brat for several very influential periods of my life, but the family also had this other dimension. There weren't a lot of Air Force colonels with graduate degrees in dramatic arts.

Q: Did you find yourself attracted as even an elementary school kid to the dramatic arts at all in the school?

EGAN: Yes, I did, in elementary and high school, and even a little at university. I structured my course work to include literature and the dramatic arts and a few courses in play writing.

Q: Well, sort of going back, in elementary school did you find yourself much of a reader at all?

EGAN: Yes because the household was full of readers. We grew up surrounded by books. I actually started public school in Kent at Kent State in a school run by the Department of Education. It was in a building on campus. I think they were called "normal" schools. We lived in three or four different houses in Kent: in an old farmhouse outside of town, in a small cottage on a lake, and right in town, very close to the university, when my parents had six sorority girls living in the house. I have vivid memories of all of those houses of my early school days and of friends in that academic community. We lived in Kent until 1952 when we went to Libya.

Q: Libya, did that leave much of an impression on you?

EGAN: Libya?

Q: Considering your later career and all that.

EGAN: It did. My father went on ahead of the family because of the requirements of his assignment and also to find some housing. It was another one of those cases in which he didn't want to live on the base at Wheelus. He wanted to live in Tripoli, which was a pretty exotic place for a young kid. He found a flat in a new apartment house just on the edge of the city. My mother and brother and I flew out of Westover Field in Massachusetts on what I think was an old Dakota, an old C47 that had to refuel in the Azores and again in Rabat.

I arrived in Tripoli with the chicken pox, a disease then totally unknown in most of North Africa and so was immediately quarantined in the visiting officers club guest house, the VOQ. Then we moved into an Italian apartment house downtown. For the first several months we were there, my father could not sleep at night. He was wakeful, bad dreams, lots of stress related things. The flight surgeon couldn't figure out what was going on. After about six months he realized that our apartment house had been built on the ruins of a Fiat factory, and that Fiat factory had been his first bombing target in the Second World War. Once he knew that, he was fine. There was something about the location and the orientation of the harbor and the old city that just wouldn't let go of him until he could identify it. I loved Tripoli as a kid. I went to school on the base. I must have been in the third grade. I had an hour of Arabic everyday. I rode a sort of commercial type bus that the base would send into the city to collect kids everyday. We spent a lot of time at Leptis Magna and Sabratha, Greek and Roman cities on the coast outside of Tripoli which appealed very much to my father's background in the classics and dramatic arts. So, even there, even in Libya in the early '50s on assignment as a pilot, he was still exposing all of us to this very different side of his own intellectual background and interests. I started in the cub scouts in Tripoli. I still have the shoulder patch from my cub scout uniform that says Tripoli which is at some point got to be a collector's item. I loved Tripoli. As far as I was concerned, our stay there was all too short.

Q: Did this hang on, I mean, as a goal, gee I want to get back to that sort of thing?

EGAN: Having grown up sort of moving around the way military families do and having been exposed to an overseas assignment like Libya, I think from that point on I always had an interest in the world outside the United States. It wasn't necessarily a very focused interest when I was young, but certainly when I got to university, I concentrated on history, political science, and languages. There was no actual structured degree program in international affairs at UNC [University of North Carolina], but they allowed me to create a program for myself which was a wonderfully flexible. I actually wrote my undergraduate thesis for the history department. I had a choice. I could have written for the history, political science or economics department. I was basically a history major doing a self-created international studies program.

Q: You were going to where?

EGAN: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Q: Let's go back to, where did you graduate from high school?

EGAN: Cooper High School in Abilene, Texas in 1964.

Q: How did you find that high school?

EGAN: I didn't care for it. To go from New York to west Texas in 1960 was the sharpest cultural transition I had ever made. It was not an easy adjustment. Public school on Long Island in those days and public school in west Texas were just very different.

Q: How were they different?

EGAN: Well, when I got to the 6th or 7th grade in New York, everybody started Latin. When I got to west Texas as a 10th grader, the only people who took Latin were senior girls, so I was put in a class of four senior class girls. All the guys I hung out with thought this was pretty strange. People dressed differently. People talked differently. Kids had cars. Nobody I went to school with on Long Island had a car. Abilene was a dry town. The Church of Christ was a very strong influence.

Q: When you say dry you mean alcohol?

EGAN: There was no liquor by the drink and there were no package stores. You couldn't buy a can of beer in Abilene. That's not how it was in New York City. Abilene was a cattle town. And Dyess Air Force Base, this huge sprawling SAC base, was a big employer for people in Abilene. Some people thought it was great that those jobs were there and other people weren't so sure why all these folks from different parts of the country came and dominated their high schools and did all that sort of stuff. These were the early days of Vietnam and many of the local kids who finished at the high school did not have college plans and either volunteered or were drafted, whereas a lot of the military kids for whom Abilene was only a two or three year slice of their life had other plans and often went on to college or university. But I felt accepted as an outsider. I was active in the high school. I had the lead in the senior play and I was the president of the National Honor Society in my senior year. I had a lot of friends. I haven't kept up with very many of them, but I had good friends. It was just very different and a big adjustment.

Q: What about academically? Did you find Latin a different interest or focus?

EGAN: No, I mean I don't have another high school experience to compare it to. Cooper had the full academic offering that you would have found anywhere in a public school in the United States. All the hard sciences and mathematics up through Trig, German, Spanish and Latin. Very active physical education department. Sports were very important. I ran track for my three years there, not very well, but I did. The big sport was football. There were about 2,000 students. The school I was in on Long Island was Kindergarten through the 8th grade and I think there were 250 kids. When we got to the 8th grade there were 22 of us which they decided was too big for a class so they hired another 8th grade teacher. Long Island was a much more intimate and familiar environment.

Q: You know, I've heard particularly when you get in west Texas and all that high school football is a religion practically. How did you find that?

EGAN: Often not much difference between the two. It is a very big deal and our big football rivalries were Midland and Odessa, which were maybe 75 or 80 miles to the west. Dallas and Fort Worth were about 100 miles to the east. It was far and away the dominant high school sport. Families were very involved. Faculty and administrators were very involved. Civic associations like the Lions Club and the Kiwanis Club and the Optimist Club were very involved. When your team played at home, everybody went.

Q: It sort of dominated, it wasn't, I mean not just the parents, but everybody in town went.

EGAN: Oh, it was a big social, civic, town event and if you weren't in the stands on Friday night or whenever the game was played, you made an effort to have a damn good reason why you weren't there because people would notice. There were marching bands and the game was covered extensively in the press. I actually had a job one year as a "reporter" to write up the week's football games for the daily newspaper. I was very bad at it and didn't do a very good job, but I sat in the press box and scribbled my notes and then tried to decipher them in the city room the next day. You're right. It dominates the school athletic year.

Q: What brought you to the University of North Carolina?

EGAN: My father had gone to Chapel Hill in the late '40s to do his graduate work so I knew the town and the school. I had a difficult time with my high school counselors in Abilene because they wanted me to go to school in Texas; particularly to Rice in Houston. I was not interested in that. UNC was a great university. UNC in those days was like the University of Virginia: it was a men's school for the first two years. I applied to Harvard and Yale, but UNC was the only place I got in.

Q: You were at the University of North Carolina from when to when?

EGAN: '64 to '68.

Q: You were mentioning that you sort of had this mixed major?

EGAN: A major they let me make up, yes.

Q: By this time, what were you reading, I'm talking elementary through high school and all that?

EGAN: The academic program at Chapel Hill was very traditional. There were general college core requirements. You had to have course work in all the disciplines. The emphasis was on very strong, very broad liberal arts, so everybody took their Shakespeare courses and their modern civilization courses and their anthropology courses and their economics courses. Everybody did that. My personal reading included public policy issues like Vietnam and civil rights, the New York Review of Books which I think was a new publication in 1963; and the old Saturday Review and Atlantic Monthly. I read a lot of Samuel Beckett, George Bernard Shaw, Faulkner and Thornton Wilder. I read quite broadly in contemporary American theater.

Q: Did you read the best plays of?

EGAN: Yes, in fact my father's library at home has still got those.

Q: I used to read the best plays of for a year, you'd sit down and because if you weren't near the theater, you could get a feel for these things.

EGAN: All those anthologies lay around the house and now actually some of them lie around my house. But we were all very concerned about Vietnam, domestic policy issues, civil rights legislation, desegregation, and free speech issues. I was at Chapel Hill when Herbert Aptheker was invited to speak by the student union and the state legislature banned his presence on campus.

Q: Wasn't he from San Diego?

EGAN: And a leading member of the American Communist Party.

Q: Yes, and sort of the intellectual guru of the Marxist left.

EGAN: Very much so. In those days Jesse Helms was the president of WRAL-TV in Raleigh.

Q: It was radio.

EGAN: It was television and he would come on after the national news every night and do his editorial on the national news. When the student body invited Aptheker to speak the state legislature said he could not set foot on campus. He spoke standing behind a low stone wall that separates the campus from the main street of town. Those issues really dominated our intellectual life and a lot of our reading and thinking revolved around those issues and their advocates.

Q: Well, let's talk about this. In the first place if you were to do this, where did North Carolina University fit in sort of the political spectrum? You know you put Madison and Columbia and Berkeley sort of to your left and all of this and some of the other universities had this, but not as much.

EGAN: I would say center left. Like any large state university it had a mix of kids from the state high schools and 10% - 15% of out-of-state students. Chapel Hill, compared to much of North Carolina, has always been pretty liberal.

Q: It's interesting because you look at North Carolina sitting in the middle of what was a very conservative region and all of a sudden you had this, not all of a sudden, it had been there for a long time.

EGAN: It's a state that has spent a lot of money on education and highways. The consolidated university system and the academic traditions of other private institutions like Duke bring a very strong liberal academic tradition to the state. It's also a state that has grown very rapidly in the last 20 or 25 years. North Carolina hosted the first research park in the country between Raleigh, Durham and Chapel Hill with Duke and the University of North Carolina and North Carolina State all nearby. The Research Triangle Park has been an important intellectual center for many years.

Q: And great climate.

EGAN: And great climate with everything from the Outer Banks to the mountains. It is the longest state on the East Coast and has tremendous geographic variety. It's been a very dynamic state and its university system has traditionally reflected that.

Q: Before we move to sort of the Vietnam War and all, how about on the problem, this is the height of the civil rights movement and all hell was breaking loose down in the South.

EGAN: It began in Greensboro.

Q: Yes, this was a sit in, but how what was your observation in how things were going at the university during this time?

EGAN: From an undergraduate's perspective, the war in Vietnam and the civil rights movement were the most important issues. You could walk off campus onto Franklin Street, the main street of what was then a fairly small university town, and there would be one of two lines of silent protest vigils: Vietnam and one for civil rights. Most of us at one time or another stood in those lines and lent our support to those causes.

Q: What were the lines doing?

EGAN: With respect to Vietnam, it would be in protest against the bombing of Cambodia, an increase in the draft call, a particularly grisly incident, or what ever dominated the news that day. It was driven to some extent by a broadly based opposition to the war on political and philosophic grounds, but it was also driven by the newspaper headlines and the evening news. On the civil rights side, it related to what was still a process of desegregating specific business establishments or "public institutions" in Chapel Hill or in the state. Somebody would get refused service in a drug store or at the A&P or whatever it happened to be, or somebody had been arrested the night before and there were clearly racial motivations in the arrest. Bill Friday was the president of the University in those days. The chancellor was a man named Carlisle Sitterson; he was also a professor in the history department. A man with deep profound groundings in liberal arts, social activists themselves. Bill Friday I think at one point was almost, I think he was considered as one of the first secretaries of education. They were professional educators in the greatest traditions of this country's large liberal arts universities and institutions both public and private. The atmosphere was very conducive to student involvement and political activism, not just standing on the street downtown as part of an overt statement, but in the classroom, whether it was your anthropology class or your economics class or your political science class. I think its difficult sometimes for people who weren't either adults or becoming adults in that decade to understand quite how intense those issues were for people in the 18 to 24 or 25-year age group. We all felt we had something to say about them and we all had a strong feeling that by our individual acts we could actually do something about it. We could change a system that we thought was not right or not in the best interests of the largest number of people. Some people might consider it naïve, I didn't and don't, but there was a real sense that you could take these issues in your hands and you could dedicate yourself to them and you as an individual and as a member of a larger group could really make a difference.

Q: Well, practically it was true.

EGAN: It did, we did. I like to think we did.

Q: Yes. What about blacks, African Americans, were they on the campus?

EGAN: There were very few black Americans in any of my four years. I don't remember having an understanding in those days of why not. I mean the university was certainly not overtly closed to the admission of blacks. There were some black students in my classes, but it wasn't, you know, I couldn't give you a percentage except to say that most students at the university were white, middle class. There tended to be some distinction between those from out of state and those from North Carolina because the academic requirements were different. If you were an out-of-state student you had to have higher College Board scores before your application would be considered. If you were a woman you couldn't come until you were a junior. Financially I think the university in Chapel Hill had been considered a real bargain and it was also a fall back for a lot of kids who didn't get into more prestigious schools. There was a very large portion of the freshmen class that were from New England prep schools. Chapel Hill was often for them their best second choice, which gave an oddly Northern character to the freshmen class. By the time we got to be seniors, there was a higher percentage of out-of-state students than there had been the first year. It was a challenging university experience. Kids who came with better academic preparation obviously had a better chance of making it through graduation. It was a real mix. Chapel Hill has also always attracted a significant Asian student body because of the medical school, the dental school, and the chemistry and mathematics departments. There's a very large school of public health. I think the political activism of black Americans at UNC was probably sharper in the '70s and '80s than it was in the '60s. It was I think in the '70s and the '80s when issues like a black student center and black studies were more prominent. Those were not issues we were wrestling with in the '60s. They were issues that kids wrestled with in later decades. We were trying to desegregate restaurants and stop a war. It was different. It was an exciting place to be.

Q: Oh, yes. Well, how much did you find, let's talk about the trying to stop the war. You're an air force brat, where did you come in on the spectrum there?

EGAN: I thought the war was a mistake and you can imagine dinner table conversations at home during Vietnam because for most of that period my father was at the Pentagon. Before I went to college he was in Bangkok. The dinner table conversations were often quite acrimonious. My father loved them and engaged in them with great spirit, but my God, we disagreed on an awful lot of things. When I was teaching, even though I was married with a child and teaching, I got several induction notices. I had a long chat with my dad one night because not only was I opposed as a matter of principal to the war, but I also thought that my draftboard was after me for lots of bureaucratic reasons. My draftboard in those days was in Abilene, Texas. I was convinced that there was a notation on my file to get this kid. Make sure he gets drafted. Probably wrong, but that was how I felt at the time. I actually discussed with my dad the possibility of refusing the draft or refusing the induction. He said, "If you do that, if you feel that strongly and if you want to take that step I will help cover your legal costs." This was from a man who was involved in the airborne command post at the Pentagon at the time. In those days to actually get the issue in court you had to refuse induction. You couldn't take any legal step unless you refused. The chances of winning such a case in those days were about 30%. The lawyer was going to cost me \$125 an hour. If I lost, I'd serve maybe 12 months, and when I was released I'd be reclassified 1A and drafted again. So, this didn't really make a lot of sense to me. This is now 1969, so despite my feelings about the war, and with a family to support, I went into OTS in the Air Force in San Antonio to be commissioned as a second lieutenant. Then I'd do a year of pilot training and go to Vietnam.

Q: Well, going back on the campus, how did you see those that were, one had the feeling that a lot of these demonstrations and all, sort of a political agitator class grew up and these were guys who were trying out their demagogue muscles and all who are not one very reasonable and two that I'm not trying to demean their basic motivation, but power was very important to them and you found conflicts in a movement between different guys, mostly I suppose trying to find out who can out shout the other.

EGAN: There's no way to diminish the importance of either the anti-war movement or the civil rights movement. To kids who were growing, testing their skills, trying to figure out what they wanted to do with their life, not entirely sure what they were really good at and what they weren't so good at. We had deeply held views and opinions, regardless of whether we had the facts straight, the opinions were passionately held. There were also simultaneous movements in music and the arts that were sort of a parallel reaction against the traditions of the '50s and the immediate post WWII environment. All these things were dumped into this caldron and brought to a simmer. Sure, there were folks, some of them in positions of real leadership responsibility in some of these movements and organizations who were demagogues, who enjoyed being the one standing on the highest box and shouting the loudest. There were also many more profoundly committed to those causes and convinced that morality was on their side and that they could make a difference. I think most of the time we were able to distinguish one from the other. The majority of people who lent their support and worked on behalf of those causes did so from the most genuine, sincere and deeply held points of view. But sure I can remember guys who would be the first to pick up a paving stone at the head of a mob that had decided, well it was Saturday night, let's go burn the ROTC building. I'm going to sound like a real romantic for a moment, but any revolutionary movement has that component to it.

Q: What about the teaching that you were getting because you know a movement like this can also lend itself to sort of the intellectual Marxists and all this. Were you getting or pretty left sort of, were you getting this?

EGAN: I think there was a little bit of that in those days. On the academic side probably most common in the political science department, much more so than in say history or economics or the other social sciences. These were also fashionable causes and academics could make a reputation with a particular book published or particular essay distributed or particular influence over the biased orientations of textbooks for example, but we didn't read a lot of textbooks in those days. There was a much greater emphasis on primary sources and a lot of the work in the general college in the social sciences was consistent with the Columbia approach to "modern civilization." The Columbia books were mostly primary sources in philosophy and political thought and that was the touchstone for most of our coursework, not somebody's textbook. In the political science department there were certainly people who were part of the protest movement itself and whose position behind the podium at the front of a room with 20 or 150 kids was their political platform. The biggest scandal with the faculty member when I was on campus actually was in the English Department. Accusations with respect to a young associate professor who made excessive use of the poem "To His Coy Mistress" with a young lady in his sophomore class. That was actually a far bigger issue than the political inclinations of Dr. Shapiro or Dr. Jones in the Political Science Department. Most of it was generated among the student body by activists within the student body and by folks who were with SDS [Students for a Democratic Society] and SNCC [Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee]. All of those groups had a presence on campus. They were all looking for followers, converts, workers, envelope stuffers, that kind of stuff. It was mostly generated outside the classroom, but the intellectual atmosphere of the classroom on the liberal arts and social sciences side was very much a part of the intellectual process that folks were going through at that time trying to figure out who they were and what they were about.

Q: Well, now, you know you had these issues, but there was something else happening out there and that is the "threat" of the Soviet Union. I mean this was not a boogiemani, this was a real problem. That from your, were you seeing this as such?

EGAN: I mean it was the heart of the Cold War, you're absolutely right. It wasn't but a couple of years after the Cuban Missile Crisis, which was a real event. Kids our age were shaken by three assassinations in a few years: the President of the United States, Martin Luther King and Bobby Kennedy. I think a lot of us really thought that the United States was close to the point of disintegrating. It didn't mean that those young people were in denial about whether Soviet policy was contrary to the best interests of the United States. But we were extremely suspicious about how an administration would use or describe Soviet activities for example in Angola, or Chinese intentions in Southeast Asia. We would watch and listen to the establishment's pronouncement from a position of profound skepticism because there were so many other issues, many of them domestic policy related that justified suspicions of government.

Q: Yes, but was there, did that translate itself into infinity that if you're being lied to by your government, maybe the Soviets have got the right answer or something like that?

EGAN: No. I think for most, certainly for most of the American intellectual community including the academic community by the time we got to the mid '60s the blush of Marxist enthusiasm that had been so common in the '30s had worn off. I don't think there were, I mean I certainly did not know anyone nor did I ever for a moment believe myself that those other ways of organizing societies like the Soviet model held any appeal. I'm sure we would have felt the same way about fascism. Our concern was not that the Soviets were right, our concern was that we were not responding correctly. I don't think anybody was enamored with what life in Moscow might have offered.

Q: This was in a way it showed, I mean this is a very sort of American response, a European response to universities tended to look more benignly on the Soviet Union I think in this period.

EGAN: I have to tell you that prior to 1968, I don't think many of us were very aware of what was going on at the university level outside the United States. I don't think most of us were very aware of what was going on in Western Europe among students. After 1968 that became more of a factor, but in the mid and early 1960s, at least from my experience, this may have been very different if you were at Berkeley or Cambridge or someplace else, but where I did my university, that was not a big factor for us. It just was not anything we paid much attention to. We were very self-centered.

Q: How about the political, you know, the Democrats and the Republicans? Did they have any, I mean you're coming up to, but you were still in, you'd graduated before all hell broke loose in Chicago and all, but were you all involved in national politics?

EGAN: Well, I left Chapel Hill when I graduated and moved to New Hampshire to teach. I had a Bobby Kennedy bumper sticker on my old Volkswagen until I sold the car 10 years later. I think to many of us in those days the Republican Party was Barry Goldwater which was just something we had great difficulty dealing with. I was not politically active either when I was teaching in New Hampshire or when I went into the Air Force. I worked at Duke for a while and I didn't come into the Foreign Service until about three years after I graduated. I think many of my undergraduate friends stayed politically active. Some of them ran for public office in North Carolina. Some of them disappeared, drug overdoses. Many of them never came back from Vietnam, kids I went to elementary school, in one or two cases came back shattered people. I had strong views and argued like hell with my family and a lot of my teaching colleagues, particularly the administration of the school, but myself I was not a political activist after I graduated.

Q: Before we leave the university we were talking about trivial issues. What about the major one? What the hell happens at a college or university where women appear on a campus only in the last two years? Where were they? I mean were they hiding up in the woods?

EGAN: In those days if you were a woman and wanted to go to the University you went first to what was called WC, the Women's College in Greensboro which is now the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. You did two years there and then you transferred to the Chapel Hill campus as a junior. There were several regular migrations that would take place in the course of the academic year. Freshmen and sophomore guys from Chapel Hill hitchhiking or driving their old cars to Greensboro.

Q: How far away was that?

EGAN: Oh, its maybe 50 miles. There was then, the beginning of the junior year, an explosion of female undergraduates for their junior and senior years. In fact my wife was one of those transfers as a junior. She transferred from Wellesley College to UNC. It was I think UVA was the same way in those years. I don't think Chapel Hill admitted women as freshmen except for the occasional fine arts major or the occasional pre-nursing major until 1971 or so. So, it was an unusual arrangement.

Q: You mentioned your significant other, what's her background?

EGAN: My wife was born in New York City. Her father was a medical doctor and her mother was a Ph.D. in genetics. I met her when I was nine in the 4th grade. She lived in Huntington and I lived in Laurel Hollow which was about two miles away. There were three public schools, Westside School, Eastside School and Lloyd Harbor School. Those schools did everything together. They had dances together. They had field days together. They played soccer against each other. She was living literally across Cold Spring Harbor from where we lived. She grew up in the Lloyd Harbor School until the 9th grade and then she went to a girls' boarding school in Garden City, Long Island. She went to Wellesley to be a chemistry major in 1964 and later transferred to UNC where she did her degree in journalism. We grew up together as kids. When I moved to Texas, her family moved to Washington. We stayed in touch over the years. When I finished high school in Texas, I worked as a bartender at the New York State World's Fair in Flushing and lived with my grandmother. One day I got a postcard from Virginia, who was living in Washington saying, gee, we've graduated from school. I'm going to Wellesley next year, where are you going, let's get together. So we did. I would go down to Washington for the weekend and she would come up to New York and stay with friends of her mothers at Cold Spring Harbor Biological Laboratories and we would see each other every weekend. We were married after she transferred to Chapel Hill. Her ancestry is Dutch, English and French.

Q: Then you went to New Hampshire for a while? Where was that, what were you doing?

EGAN: When I finished my degree in '68 I was offered a job at the Tilton School in Tilton, New Hampshire which is about 20 miles west of Laconia. It's an old New England mill town. The Tilton School was founded in the early 20th Century as a town academy. Over the years it had become a boarding school for boys. I taught ancient history, composition and rhetoric and Shakespeare and was an assistant coach for the lacrosse team and the soccer team. I loved the teaching. I loved the time in the classroom. I didn't care for the administration at the school and I think even if I had not had problems with my draftboard, I would not have stayed. I gave them notice in December. I said I'd finish the academic year, but that I wouldn't be back.

Q: What was the problem with administration?

EGAN: Well, part of the problem I think was me. I was 21 or 22 and only a few years older than some of the seniors. I thought the curriculum was dated. I thought the school was too concerned with producing a specific type of graduate rather than focusing on what the students' interests, strengths and particular characteristics were. I made one really terrible mistake early that year. The chairman of the history department came to sit in on one of my classes. I forget what I was lecturing about. At one point I said, "Now, who remembers ..." whatever the question was. Nobody could answer the question. I said, "Dr. Jones, tell us ... who or what ..." whatever my question was. Of course he couldn't answer the question either and was not happy with me. I never did that again. I took these kids down to Boston several times. I took them down one Friday night for a Jimmy Hendrix concert at the Boston Garden and one of the faculty advisors got upset with me because one of the kids had a can of beer in the back of the bus. He was expelled the next day. I suppose it was my fault.

Q: Well, the problem is, you were right there at the fault line. Don't trust anybody over 30, these guys were all over 30.

EGAN: These guys were well over 40 and some of them had been there for 50 years.

Q: Yes, and you happened to be on the cusp of that particular phase. I'm sure all these schools went through this.

EGAN: The Latin teacher at this school who was a wonderful man. He lived with his hunting dogs out in the woods and was a real classicist. Read his Greek and Latin fluently. He was steeped in the classics. He graduated from Harvard in 1922. He began as a Latin teacher at this school that summer and had been there ever since. He had views on how you run a boarding school for boys and they were not my views. So, I think you're right. It didn't work out for me, but I loved the teaching.

Q: Okay, well, this is a good place to stop and I think we'll pick this up the next time when you have found that you wanted to get out of the wilds of New Hampshire and you're off to the joys of Texas again, is that it?

EGAN: Off to the joys of officer candidate school at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas.

Q: Oh, yes, I'm an alumni of Lackland.

This is tape two, side one with Wes Egan. Let me just see, you wanted to say something. Okay, let's see, you're off to Texas. What year did you go to Texas?

EGAN: The summer of 1969.

Q: So, what was there, basic officer OCS at Lackland?

EGAN: Yes, I sent my wife and son off back to Chapel Hill to live while I did this. In those days I think it was called either OTS or OCS, Officer Candidate School or Officer Training School. It was at Lackland Air Force Base just outside San Antonio at the Medina Annex. I was supposed to get my commission, go to fighter pilot training in Arizona, and then to go to Vietnam. As it turned out, I was medically discharged about two weeks before commissioning for a minor defect in my spine. I went back to Chapel Hill in the early fall of 1969 by which time the teaching year had started so I couldn't go back to New Hampshire even if I had wanted to. Then I was reclassified 1A by my draft board despite my honorable discharge. I remember reporting several times to the induction center in Raleigh and being sent away as soon as they saw my discharge papers. That happened two or three times before I was finally classified 3Y?

Q: So, what happened?

EGAN: I wound up working as an apprentice to a Yorkshireman at Duke University. He had been with the Times of London before the Second World War and when Britain entered the war, he went into British intelligence. At the end of the war he went back to the Times and they said, "Jeremy you can have your old job back, but there's a terrible shortage of paper and we'll pay you, but I'm not sure there's going to be an awful lot to do." He packed up his family of seven children and 14 tons of books and moved to Jamestown, Rhode Island and opened an antiquarian shop in Jamestown that specialized in military history, incunabula, books published before 1500, and English water colors. He got tired of the winters, and moved to Duke where they offered him space right next to the Duke Chapel. In addition to running this very interesting antiquarian shop he was also one of the rare book buyers for the Duke Library rare book collection. He was looking for somebody who had a little Greek and a little Latin and who needed work, so he took me on as his assistant. The idea was that I would learn the antiquarian business from him and when he retired, buy out his portion of the shop and continue the antiquarian business. I loved it. I could hang a sign on the door that said gone fishing if I felt like it in the afternoon. He taught me the antiquarian trade and lots of other things. He introduced me to several authors that I probably would not have stumbled across on my own. He was an enormously interesting man who I became very fond of.

Q: Just out of curiosity, I run into these esoteric professions, how did you find the antiquarian in books? I mean was this a cutthroat thing because there must be few books and a lot of customers.

EGAN: In those days, this was the late '60s it was not at all cutthroat. We did most of our buying from dealers in the UK. We bought occasionally in the States. Some people think the antiquarian trade is dominated by the likes of Sotheby's and Christies and these specialized dealers in New York. I didn't find that to be the case in '69 and I suspect it was because of the way in which he approached the trade. It was a very gentlemanly, civilized profession, at least the version of it that he exposed me to.

Q: Was Duke interested in any particular library, any particular area in rare books?

EGAN: Anything published before 1500. But most of the business was in books published much later and a fair amount of business in things from the 17th, 18th and 19th Centuries. We bought what we wanted and put it on the shelves to see if our customers felt the same way. The shop was not part of the university bookstore system, so it wasn't a textbook and beer mug shop. It was an academic browsing shop and a very nice environment to work in. And it paid the rent.

Q: Where did the customers come from?

EGAN: A lot of them were faculty from Duke and UNC.

Q: Then to continue, what happened?

EGAN: I had taken the written part of the Foreign Service exam in '68 but didn't pass it the first time. I did pass it in 1969, but I was not sure that I wanted to come into the Foreign Service. I came to Washington to take the orals and passed the orals and had been given all of the paperwork to begin my security and medical clearance procedures. Since I wasn't sure I wanted to enter the Foreign Service, I didn't particularly want to be offered an appointment and have to face that decision, so I just never sent them the paperwork. About every six months for the next two years I would get either a phone call or a letter from the board of examiners saying, well, we haven't gotten your paperwork and I would say, yes, I'm working on it, which of course I wasn't. Sometime in the summer of 1971, I decided, we decided, my wife and I both decided that as comfortable as our lifestyle was, we weren't quite ready to settle down so completely. I scribbled away on the paperwork and sent it off to the board of examiners and had the cheek to call them and tell them that I had sent it and if they wanted to offer me an appointment I would take it. What seemed like a couple of months later, it must have been a little longer than that, but it seemed like a very short time, I got a phone call saying can you be in Washington for the September class? I said yes and packed up and moved. You can't do that these days. They run a clock on you and if they don't get your paperwork within a certain period of time they take you off the register.

Q: Do you recall any of the questions that were asked on the oral exam or how it went?

EGAN: I remember being asked what I would do if I was asked to implement a policy with which I had disagreed. Of course this was still the height of Vietnam. I said that if I had been part of the debate or discussion on the policy and it came out in a way that I in the end really had trouble living with, I thought I would have only two choices and that would be either implement the policy or resign my commission. I don't remember who was on the panel, but I think there were five or six people. It went on for an hour and a half or so. It was actually quite relaxed and comfortable. I didn't feel at all intimidated. Most of the questions related to the issues of the day, questions related to what I read and what I thought about, why I wanted to come into the Foreign Service, why the career was of interest to me, what I thought I could contribute to it. It was more of a conversation than an examination. I thought they were trying to figure out what kind of a person I was, how I would fit in. As I recall, my incoming class which was a fairly large one. I think there were 53 of us, I think there had not been a class for a while. There was a period in which the register was quite full and it was that same period in which an awful lot of people who came into the Service went first into CORDS in Vietnam. We may have been one of the first entering classes after the de-emphasis on CORDS work in Vietnam.

Q: You came in in '71?

EGAN: September of 1971 at the old FSI in Rosslyn.

Q: Did you get any feel for the composition of your class, who were they, where were they coming from?

EGAN: Yes. Ambassador Harry Barnes was in charge of the junior officer program in those days and one of the first thing we did as a group was to introduce ourselves; say a little about who we were, where we came from and what we had been doing before the Foreign Service. My colleagues had been mowing lawns in Western Massachusetts for the last two years, in the graduate program at Georgetown, writing doctoral dissertations, hanging out in San Francisco, etc. It was a very varied group. After 10 or 15 years, about half of us were gone, some because they decided to leave and some because they were asked to leave. I was probably in the first batch of that group that began to retire after 30 years. It was a wonderful crowd. We were all slightly irreverent. We gave Harry a fairly hard time, but it was a good experience and I went from that into Italian language training because my first assignment was supposed to have been Mogadishu. I think the first Department official I ever met after Harry Barnes and Gib Lanpher, who was my career counselor, was Brad Bishop, who murdered his wife in suburban Maryland and then fled to North Carolina.

Q: He also murdered his kids.

EGAN: That's right, he was the Somali desk officer at the time and when the wish list came out as to where we were all going. I drew Somalia. I went to be interviewed by Ambassador Matthew Loomer who was going out as ambassador. I'm not sure he thought very highly of me. It was a stilted conversation, but I went into Italian language training because in those days it was an Italian speaking post. After doing the entire Italian language training program, my position was eliminated and my orders were canceled.

Q: While you were in the junior officer training camp, we were in the process of drawing down from Vietnam and all, but was Vietnam sort of a topic of your group? I mean were you getting a feel about how that particular group felt about Vietnam?

EGAN: Not especially. I think we had all in some way come to grips with the issue personally. The way in which we came to grips with it obviously had a bearing on how we felt about public service. So, the 50 plus members of this group, I mean when there was something you know that hit the front pages or crossed the evening news that we all thought was outrageous, we obviously all talked about why we thought it was outrageous, but we weren't for whatever reason, we weren't struggling overtly against the policy and I don't think any of us came into the Service to change that policy. Several had done military service. Several had been to Vietnam and back. Most of us had lost friends in Vietnam, but we were mostly consumed with figuring out what the Department of State and the Foreign Service were all about and whether there was a place for us in it and how to find that place.

Q: In this figuring out, do you recall kind of where you wanted to go? I mean what was sort of your goal and what type of specialty did you want to do? I remember when I came in this was back in '55, they said how many of you want to be ambassadors and of course we all raised our hand, but I kept thinking gee, consul general in Bermuda sounds pretty good to me. I don't know what he does or what a consul general is, but it sounds pretty nice.

EGAN: They asked us the same question. Only about half of us put our hands up. The speaker said, okay, those of you who didn't put your hands out, get out. I'm really only interested in talking to those who have some ambition. Slowly everybody else's hands crept up. We thought public service was not only an honorable thing to do, despite the disagreements we may have had with the political leadership in Washington, but we also thought of it as a profession. It wasn't a job; it was a profession to which I think most people in that class felt they were making a long-term commitment.

I think the average age of our incoming class was 24 or 25, a lot younger than it is today, but not right out of school, so all of us had done something after our undergraduate degree and some of us had actually gone on and done graduate work and earned graduate degrees. We weren't fresh college graduates. We had some experience in the world, however limited and that experience was an enormously turbulent one because it covered the Kennedy assassinations, Martin Luther King's assassination, and the McGovern campaign. It covered a period of time in which I think several of us worried that things were really close to coming apart in the United States. Having drawn some inspiration from the Kennedy administration, I don't want to put too much emphasis on that, but it was part of the atmosphere, we wanted to do our part and we felt we really could make a difference about things. I think we all felt that we were agents of change in the late '60s and early '70s. I think we all had a feeling that there would be stretches of government service when the good assignments would come and there would be times when they wouldn't. There would be stretches where the promotions came and stretches where the promotions didn't come, but the commitment was a long term one.

There were people who said, well, I want to go to Paris or nowhere. A couple of those folks went to Paris and were out of the Service in 10 or 15 years because it went nowhere. There were those who were more attracted to smaller postings in Africa thinking that you can get a lot more responsibility and authority a lot sooner at a small hardship post than you could than if you went to one of the big factories in which if you were a political officer you might sit there doing newspaper clippings for the bio file. I mean everybody had sort of a slightly different take on that. I think by and large the group was very operationally minded. There weren't a lot of theoretical musings. These were people who wanted to do something, wanted to get their hands on something, wanted to make an impact in some way on some thing that was part of that system. I think the vast majority of us went overseas right away. I can't actually remember anybody that had a Washington assignment first.

Q: Had you picked up any idea of what you wanted to concentrate in, geographic specialty?

EGAN: I didn't and there were some people in the Department who kept pestering me about that. They thought I had to have a sort of regional area of expertise and a mother bureau. They didn't mean the economics bureau; they meant a geographic bureau that would take care of you, consider you one of theirs and guide you along to the right assignments at the right time. That didn't interest me and I resisted it for 30 years.

Q: So, what happened?

EGAN: So personnel called me when the Somalia job was scrubbed and I was reassigned to the Consulate General in Durban, South Africa. After four months of Italian language training my orders were rewritten and my family and I, we had two children by then, packed our bags and got on a TWA flight from New York to Abidjan, to Lagos, to Accra, to Kinshasa, to Johannesburg, and finally to Durban. It was a 30-hour flight with two little kids and a basketball team on the plane. The consul general was a wonderful man named Ed Holmes, my first boss. There were four Americans and five South African employees. The consulate was on the top floor of what was then the tallest office block in Durban: a 14-story building called Norwich Union House, a British South African insurance company. Durban was a very colonial era, English speaking city and the center of the English speaking opposition party. I did political work and most of the consular work including passports, immigrant and non-immigrant visas.

Q: You were there by the way from when to when?

EGAN: I was in Durban from 1972 to 1974. I got to know Gatsha Buthelezi and was responsible for a portion of the contact work and reporting work on the dissident black South African Student Organization (SASO). Steve Biko, Barney Pityana, and Striny Moodley were all early contacts of mine. Natal province was the center of the Indian community in South Africa. About 93% of the Indian population of South Africa was in Natal. It was all very exotic and exciting.

Q: Had you been prepared for the problem of South Africa, apartheid and all that and how did Holmes, I mean what was sort of your initial, as you went there, what was your mental state on this and how did we seem to be dealing with it in Natal?

EGAN: I think I was unprepared. My family and I were unprepared for the weight of the daily impact of apartheid on life even as a privileged white. I remember feeling in the first few days that there was this extraordinary level of tension in everything you did. Walking down the street, going in a shop, taking a taxi, going out to lunch, meeting people on the beach. It felt terribly tense and I remember thinking that you must get numb to it after a while. It was hard for me to understand how you could live for very long with that sort of social and political tension dogging every step you took. Now, part of that may have been because of the nature of my job. My principal contacts were with the opposition party, the black student movement, and the Institute of Race Relations which was headquartered in Durban in those days. We knew people like Helen Suzman and Alan Payton. Alan Payton taught me how to play proper croquet. He was an extraordinary man in his own right. Maybe its because the people that I dealt with day in and day out were people pushing for change, but I remember just being overwhelmed by that sense of tension, burdened by it. It was very wearing.

Q: You know, I felt this at some posts where you find that nothing you get, but is that, well, now, was there any carryover or did you see any similarity between being in North Carolina and the race relations?

EGAN: I think the fact that I had lived in North Carolina, Alabama and West Texas and that I had been modestly involved in efforts to push the civil rights issues in places like Chapel Hill when I was a student obviously contributed to the reaction that I felt when we stepped off the plane in Durban.

Q: What about, what was sort of our, the Department, government attitude as reflected through Holmes and others in officialdom towards the situation there?

EGAN: Well, I think at a policy level, at the higher level, the administration was concerned about stability in South Africa, but also cognizant of the fact that the current system couldn't last forever and that the potential for an explosion was absolutely there. This was not that long after Sharpeville, which was still vivid in people's minds. I think I was there during a period when our policy was beginning to change. It was slightly unusual that I was pushed to have the contacts I had with dissident black young South African students. I think we were torn as to what our relationship or view of the nationalist government's homeland policy should be. There was a significant American business presence in South Africa and U.S. firms were not a particular force for radical change. It was I think a transition period. I think the question that dominated much of our thinking was whether it was possible for the system to change rapidly enough to avoid an explosion? When I left South Africa in '74 I still didn't know the answer to that question.

We actually used to feel the need to get out of South Africa every four or five months just to break the sense of tension. We'd just go to places like Lesotho. We could be there in three or four hours and we'd put the kids in the car and spend a long weekend in Maseru or a small town in the mountains just to get away from the daily rule of apartheid. I think U.S. policy was in some flux, I think it was moving from a period in which we really didn't argue with South African authorities that much, whatever we might say rhetorically with respect to apartheid and racial policies. We certainly were not, however, in what I would call the forefront of pressure for change on the national government. We were in that odd funny sort of in-between sometimes rather ambivalent period of policy transition.

Q: What was the...?

EGAN: Ed Holmes, before we go on, you asked about Ed Holmes. Ed Holmes was an old African hand, a wonderful guy. I think I learned more from him in my two years in Durban about the Foreign Service than I ever learned subsequently. That either means that I was frozen in time in '74 or that he taught me some good lessons. He was very engaged with the opposition community and the black community, aggressively engaged, visibly engaged. I think sometimes the Embassy in Pretoria thought he was going a little too far, but the career DCM in Pretoria, Bob Smith, who I think went on to become our ambassador to Ghana, was a rock of stability in that mission. Those were the days in which the DCM in a big embassy in Pretoria would fly down to Durban to meet the new junior officer and have dinner with him and sit in his living room and put his feet up and have a drink and talk about the mission and the policy and the Foreign Service and the Department of State. It was a very nice relationship. We felt that our work was different from what the folks in Pretoria, Johannesburg and Cape Town did.

Q: Let's talk a little bit about the government of Natal and I mean how the economy, what were you seeing there?

EGAN: Durban was in those days, I don't know if it still is, was the second largest and busiest port in the world after Hamburg. The economy of Natal was dominated by the sugarcane industry and in fact most of the Indian population of Natal had come to South Africa in the late 19th Century to cut cane as indentured servants because Zulu men would not work in the fields. It was considered undignified. Mahatma Gandhi got his political start just north of Durban. Sugarcane dominated the economy. Sugarcane and other agricultural activities and the port of Durban, which was a huge, source of revenue and a much larger commercial port than Cape Town. It dominated the economy. Since it was an English speaking province, English insurance companies, automobile companies, and pharmaceutical companies dominated the economy. Almost every country that had an embassy in Pretoria had a consulate or a consulate general in Durban. So it was a very active consular and diplomatic community.

Q: Was the government an Afrikaner government?

EGAN: Yes, led by the nationalist party.

Q: But how did that translate into Natal? Was it South Africa, like a federation or was it?

EGAN: It was after all not so much the united party and the English speaking opposition in South African politics, but the realization on the part of some Afrikanse leaders that the system of apartheid simply could not be sustained and that there was a black leadership with which the future of South Africa could then be negotiated. That avoided the explosion that all of us feared might occur, but certainly the English speaking opposition party in Natal sustained a level of rhetorical opposition in public life in parliament and in the press. Donald Woods was a very aggressive newspaper editor in East London and Southern Natal. He was eventually jailed by the government and spent some time in the United States as a guest lecturer at several universities. Not jailed, he was banned. Certainly that sustained voice of opposition to the policy of apartheid was a factor in the eventual solution.

Q: Helen Suzman was from Natal?

EGAN: No, Helen was I think actually was from Cape Town. Collin Eglin was the United Party leader in Natal. Alan Payton was a political activist in those days married to an American. When I arrived, I didn't know an airgram from an operations memorandum. I didn't know how you wrote a telegram. I felt as though I knew almost nothing about the mechanics of doing a Foreign Service Officer's job. I knew the immigration and nationality act. I knew how to apply the law with respect to visas, passports, nationality and citizenship, but what a political officer was supposed to do, how he was supposed to do it, and how to make the work of a political officer relevant to people elsewhere in the mission and at home, I had not a clue. It was Ed Holmes who took me in hand and tried to bring me along in that respect.

Q: How did you deal, let's stick to the sort of the white side first, with the united party? I mean you were a political officer. You were dealing with the dissidents, how about the white dissidents?

EGAN: I didn't deal with them at the national level, I dealt with them at only the provincial level and my objective was to get to know them, to attend their party conferences if I could, to develop relationships with them that allowed me to comment intelligently about the positions the party was taking at the national level, but always from a provincial prospective. I covered the Parliamentary elections in Natal so I could tell the Embassy in Pretoria and Washington what was important, what the local issues were, who I thought was going to come out on top, and what the significance of that was. It was a narrow regional perspective which for a brand new Foreign Service Officer was not a bad thing in the sense that even though I was the most junior member of the consulate staff, the fact that I was an American gave me access to some of those groups that I might not have had if I'd represented some other government. It was a perfect Foreign Service learning environment. I learned some critical lessons in my two years.

Q: Such as?

EGAN: There was a very important election being held in Ladysmith.

Q: The siege of Ladysmith?

EGAN: The siege of Ladysmith. The very same. I went up to Ladysmith and I spent three or four days there and spoke I think to every registered voter in town, party leaders, rank in file, shopkeepers, farmers, everybody. I came back to Durban and I wrote my report and predicted not just who would win, but by what vote count and what percentage. Ed Holmes took this draft from me and looked at it, came into my office an hour or so later and said, "Egan, I'm not going to send this. You can't be that positive of how this election is going to come out." I don't honestly remember what the issues were or why it was so important, but it was important. I said, "Ed, I have talked to everybody in that town and I am absolutely positive that this is the way it's going to come out." So, we went back and forth on this for a day or so. I stuck to my guns. He said, "You can't be so sure and if you're wrong we're going to look really stupid to the embassy and the folks at home." I had the adamancy of youth in my favor and finally after a couple of days he relented. He said, "All right, I'll sign this out." It was an airgram. We didn't send telegrams unless the sky was falling. The election was held about 10 days later and I was absolutely right. I had it right on the nose. Of course my head was huge.

There was another election coming up in the Transkei, a little white enclave known as Port St. John's. The issue was whether or not Port St. John's would vote to become a member of the black homeland of the Transkei or whether it would try to retain some autonomy from the homeland government. I went down to Port St. John's on the Indian Ocean, about a day and a half drive from Durban to do the same sort of thing. I talked to everybody, came back to Durban, sat at my manual typewriter and pecked out my report in which again I predicted the results. Ed Holmes looked at it and said, "You sure?" I said, "I'm sure." My track record was pretty good so he signed it out. I was completely wrong. Completely. I could not have been more wrong. The lesson I think I learned was that it's not smart to predict who is going to win. What is important is to understand what the possible results mean for us and the relationship. If it comes out that way here's what it means for us. I thought it was an important lesson for me to learn.

Q: I think that this is something that so often we get caught in trying to play political reporter and how its going to be rather than really take a look at what is in it for the United States.

EGAN: That's right. I'm glad I learned that lesson early.

Q: Were the groups, the white groups trying to look for the dissident white groups looking for support from the United States and if so, what could you do?

EGAN: The white English speaking opposition obviously wanted to be seen to have a close relationship with the United States and to be seen to have some political support from the United States in their efforts to promote change. We gave them that. Important visitor program grants, visits to the United States, watching the U.S. state and municipal elections. The sort of IVP program, exchange visitors were a standard part of the way in which we developed some of those relationships. We did a lot of that with the United Party and they were very open and very receptive and eager for it, so it was easy. With the black student movements, SASO and other movements in Kwazulu and Transkei, black South Africans were understandably much more suspicious about our motivations. This you know was a political environment in which state security was all over the place. Literally behind it every bush when we went out and moved around. Certainly when my wife and I had these folks to our house there was a special branch guy sitting in a car out in the street taking license plate numbers. People ran a risk being associated with us.

They looked at the United States government as simply being too chummy with the powers that be in Pretoria, so they were naturally suspicious of why it was we wanted to know them and to have a relationship. There was a suspicion at another level that things they said to us would be reported quickly to the South African domestic intelligence services. It took, these were not relationships that came easily. I think the fact that I was young, I was in my mid '20s. The fact that I pushed to establish those relationships, but I didn't push too hard. I tried to be patient with them. They were relationships that I knew I could develop only if I allowed them to develop slowly. I wouldn't say I had magical access, but I did get to know them and I did spend time with them in their offices, in their homes, on their campuses. I know I was routinely followed by the South African security services for that. I don't know of any case in which they objected to the Embassy about my activities, but I expect I came pretty close on some occasions. My predecessor had not been asked to do that. I was doing things that officers at the consulate had not traditionally done and that raised suspicions.

Q: Back to the United Party, did you see if hit by one can almost call the English social disease and that is the labor, the labor movement as opposed capitalist versus worker and that sort of thing, Marxist?

EGAN: No. These folks were first and foremost South Africans. Secondly, English speaking South Africans, so their sense of identity with their political cause was a very national one. These were not people who felt that their sort of ideological home was someplace else. These were people whose past and future was in South Africa regardless of what their ethnic heritage was, whether they were from English, Huguenot, Asian or whatever. It was a South African first perspective and they were committed to social change in what was their home country. There was no particular identification with either the labor party in the UK or the socialist democratic parties elsewhere in Europe. That was not an issue. This was all very home grown. They were patriots in the first sense. They were a voice that was loud enough to be heard both in parliament and in the halls of government in Pretoria and loud enough to be heard by the world outside of South Africa. For a lot of people outside South Africa, relations with the English speaking opposition was easier than it would have been with an Afrikaner. There were a lot of international links, which gave them some stature. They were not allowed enough voice to create the change that was necessary in South Africa, but they were certainly an important voice in keeping the recognition of the need for change alive and for reminding the rest of the international community that there was an issue in South Africa that needed to be addressed. A way needed to be found to address it. So, they were a critical part of the process of changing South Africa, but they didn't lead it.

Q: With the student movement and all, we were in a period of high Cold War, this is Nixon Kissinger period, were you looking for communist elements within the black movement because this was one of our major concerns was communism in Africa. I mean this is on a continental basis.

EGAN: There was a busy South African communist party, but its members lived mostly in exile. It did not have a significant following as a political party per se in South Africa. The structure of the state security system was pervasive. There may have been folks at the Embassy in Pretoria in one section or another who were concerned or preoccupied with communist influence in South Africa, but it was not part of our work in Natal. I was never asked about it and it was never suggested that I look for it. I was never warned about it, it just was not part of the work we felt we were there to do and I have to say I never heard very much about it from the Embassy in Pretoria.

Q: How about the black student movement? How did you see them? Was it an intellectual movement or sort of from the masses movement or what was it?

EGAN: There have been prominent black leaders in South Africa forever. Guys that I got to know were the 1970s representatives of that tradition. Some of them clearly represented the emerging contemporary, political leadership. There were some generational differences and there were some racial issues among black South Africans, some of it tribal, some of it between Blacks and Indians that made the scene very complicated, but they were willing to take greater collective risks in the pursuit of racial equality in South Africa than some of their predecessors. They were focused on the enormity of the problems at home. They had a very practical orientation. Some of them were extraordinarily charismatic. Some of them were slightly intellectual, but not, this was not an intellectual elite, this was a generational, at least in my view a generational elite. Those who were most influential and successful I think tended to be those who had resolved some of the traditional conflicts outside the white community in South Africa in the sense that whether you were a Zulu or a Xhosa or an Indian or Hindu or Muslim or Christian didn't matter to them very much. It was a relatively heterogeneous group. Guys like Steve Biko, who I knew a bit, not a lot. He was a guest in my house in Durban once or twice with several of his colleagues. In fact there was a Washington, D.C. city councilman, Sterling Tucker, who was visiting Durban on a State Department sponsored trip and one of those evenings was arranged at my house for him, an established political personality from the District of Columbia, and some of the black student leadership in South Africa. All of these groups occasionally got funding from outside sources and I expect that that funding probably ran the gamut from the extreme left to the center, but I don't remember being terribly preoccupied with that. I remember feeling that if the revolution came to South Africa, these guys would be in the forefront of it, both as folks who made it happen and as folks who then tried to manage the results of it. As it turns out of course it was not that generation; it was the next one that rose to prominence in the '80s. In the case of Nelson Mandela of course a generation or two before them, but they were certainly part of the process of raising the consciousness of black South Africans with respect to what was possible and what was necessary.

Q: On the social side, actually it's a political social side, but having people over, was this from the black community or something? Was this a provocation of the powers that be there?

EGAN: They didn't like it, but they never did anything about it and I don't know any cases in which folks who came to our house suffered directly or in the short term for doing so. I'm sure it was added to their file, but of course I was not the only young political officer in Durban doing this. I mean I had an English colleague and a German colleague and a French colleague and they were all doing the same thing.

Q: I was going to ask, what about the international or the consular corps doing there?

EGAN: For the British it was a long, an old formerly colonial posting. I remember the British being the most engaged, as we were, on political and social issues. Others, I would scratch my head and say, what in God's name was the Portuguese consul general doing here? No offense to my Portuguese colleague, but it was the commercial and shipping interests I think dominated the work of most of those consulates. I have to say the shipping side of things wound up to be a sizable part of my own consular responsibilities. It's the first time I've ever done crew changes or handled cases where the first mate would stab the captain and I would be called at 2:00 in the morning. That's a world that I had never had any exposure to. It was my first visit to a morgue. It was my first visit to identify the body of a dead seaman. My first experience with trying to ship bodies back to the United States. My first experience with the seamen's union. I mean there's a whole world out there that most of us never have any contact with and I think for most of the consulates their affairs revolved around shipping issues, flagging issues, crew issues and commercial relationships. The British and ourselves were far and away the most active politically.

Q: Did you have any tools to deal with say the black students? I mean leadership grants and things of that nature.

EGAN: We did a couple of student grants. A couple of visits to the States. A couple of exchange visitor type of things. We opened a small information office while I was there and I played a part in hiring an English speaking Afrikaner woman to run it. We spent a lot of time using that center as a cultural draw for visiting performers, for exposing students to aspects of U.S. policy and the things that small information shops do. We had to scratch around for money to do it and it was all kind of done out of our back pocket, but it's still there 30 years later. We didn't have much of a budget for such things. The lion's share of those funds was used by the Embassy in Pretoria, but there was a reasonably equitable distribution of it to the constituent posts because South Africa is one of those countries in which the three constituent posts, Durban Johannesburg, and Cape Town, were all very different than Pretoria.

Q: What about the Kwazulu and Buthelezi and the separate states?

EGAN: We opposed the Government's homelands policy. We said that. I'm not aware of any particular actions we took with respect to the Government in Pretoria to try to discourage them from doing it, but our public position was that this is not the solution to South Africa's problem. From our perspective in Natal, it was important for us to get to know the leadership of the homelands because they were likely to have a role in South Africa's domestic political scene and we wanted to make sure we knew these folks and had a relationship with them. We made some small grants in education and agriculture. We didn't have an aid program. There was no aid program in South Africa at all while I was there. It was done with pocket change. When Dr. Buthelezi was installed as the chief executive councilor of KwaZulu, the ceremony took place in a small town in northern Natal called Ulundi. I think I was the only U.S. government official who was there for his installation. I didn't think too much at the time whether that was a statement of some sort that we were making, but I was delighted to go and witness this extraordinary Zulu tribal festival that was associated with his installation. I shared a hotel room with a reporter from a newspaper in Durban and he helped me with some of his contacts and I helped him with some of mine. The relationship was not one of acceptance, but was one of wanting to make sure we knew what was going on in these areas and that was part of my job. The same thing was true of the Transkei.

Q: Did you get any leaders from the black movement in the United States? I'm thinking of the Jesse Jacksons and others.

EGAN: Not that I can recall.

Q: Not at that time.

EGAN: Not that I can recall. No. I mean we had some black Americans who were prominent at the municipal level occasionally, Sterling Tucker, I mentioned was one of them from Washington. He's the only one I recall spending time in Durban at the U.S. government's expense for the purpose of interacting with the black community.

Q: This wasn't, in a way you weren't on, I'm not trying to downgrade it, but the black socialist circuit or the anti-apartheid social search. It wasn't in effect then which it became later on.

EGAN: It was not as coherent as it became. This period was not the beginning of those movements, but it was early on. There were still issues about whether different tribal groups could actually work together. There were some serious problems between the black and the Indian community, not just in Natal, but elsewhere in South Africa and those were still issues that had to be overcome within the anti-apartheid movement. The movement did not have the coherence or the broad international stature that it was to enjoy later on.

Q: How about the Indian community? How did we see that at that time?

EGAN: They had a very dominant position at a certain level of business and economic activity. As I said a lot of the Indian families had originally come to Natal to work in the cane fields, but they moved on quickly into the middle class business community, the universities, and journalism. It was a community that had a very vibrant intellectual elite. By the '70s there were large chunks of the Indian community that had become quite prosperous, had been very successful either in the professions or in business and it showed and in fact it was occasionally one of the sources of friction between the Indian community and the black community.

Q: But sort of basically when you were there you didn't feel that the American government was pressing very hard? I mean we were trying to see what was happening, but you know.

EGAN: We weren't pressing very hard. We were sort of gently supportive and our range of contacts with these communities was a little bit new. I didn't step into that job and inherit a long tradition of contacts. Ed Holmes, the Consul General was extremely active and very successful on this front just because he had the personality for it. It was genuine. His reaching out to these communities was something he would have done no matter where he lived, whether he had been an employee of the United States government or not, it was just part of his background, part of his personality and he did it very effectively. He had served extensively in Africa. He had a good, a wonderful touch for dealing with people. He was a very sensitive man. Perfect person for that job and to project that image. Ed bumped up against I wouldn't say restraints, but slightly more traditional opinions that were held elsewhere in the United States government. I don't think he ever really had his wrist slapped except for one or two things that I did.

Q: Well, did you get any feel for.

EGAN: So, at the beginning it felt as though we were doing something not totally new, but a little bit, a little bit new.

Q: Did you get any feel as a political appointee ambassador where Hurd stood?

EGAN: No and I'll tell you why. I was 24 or 25. I was trying to learn a new profession. I had a lot of things to figure out. He would come to Durban a couple of times a year. The Consul General would do an event at the residence of some sort and we would all go out to lunch together. I was always aware of this huge gap between his station in life and in his profession and mine and I was the most junior of the three Americans on the consulate staff. We didn't sit in Durban and deal with issues of global policy. We had a direct reporting channel to the Department, but we also often worked very much under the supervision of the Embassy. I don't remember even being particularly aware at the time of the distinction between a political appointee and a career ambassador. I had much more contact with his DCM who was a career guy. That DCM worked real hard on the education of junior staff in Pretoria and at the constituent posts. As I said I stepped off the plane and I'd never heard of an operations memorandum or an airgram. Our communications was those old HW28s that ran through the local post office.

Talking about sort of the working environment in Durban. I think back on it particularly in light of subsequent postings. We didn't have a foreign ministry to deal with. I wasn't being sent off, none of us were going off to do demarches. We didn't get instructions to raise policy issues with the local government, the municipal or provincial government. I mean here the Yom Kippur War was underway and embassies around the world were getting instructions, go and beat up on so and so and get them to agree with us on this, that or the other thing. Absolutely not part of our professional life. If you think about it for a minute, take the context of the '73 war. The issues that we reported on during that period were the effect of the embargo, the oil embargo on South Africa, particularly the port of Durban and the fact that we wound up with literally hundreds of ships sitting offshore waiting to come into Durban for fuel which the South African port authority, the Durban port authority was having trouble supplying. Here you have a war raging in the Middle East and these great issues of policy at play for the administration in Washington and our view of it is that little sliver. The greatest impact of the '73 war on my life as a Foreign Service Officer in South Africa in 1973 was that I could only buy gas every other day and not after 5:00 in the afternoon. It meant that I couldn't drive from Durban to Cape Town because I couldn't keep the car fueled enough to make that road trip. All of the issues of high policy and the Arab Israeli conflict were just not part of our world in this tiny constituent post.

Q: Well, then in '74 you left Durban?

EGAN: In '74 I left Durban for the Operations Center in Washington. The executive secretariat in those days would send out a notice to supervisory officers asking if they had candidates for the operations center. My boss asked me if I was interested. He himself was a graduate of the Ops Center. I said I was and so in '74 we moved back to Washington and I took a job as a watch officer in the Ops Center in July of 1974.

Q: You did that for how long?

EGAN: Well, in those days, it was an 18 month assignment. You spent nine months on the watch and nine months on "the line" in the executive secretariat. In the Ops Center you served first as a watch officer and then as an editor of the Secretary's morning summary. Then you moved from the editor position usually to the line where you staffed the paperwork coming up for the Secretary. Usually the line officers had particular geographic or functional core responsibility. I did my watch officer stint and then became an editor of the Secretary's morning summary. Very late one night the telephone rang, as I remember at 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning. It was Larry Eagleburger who was then executive assistant to the Secretary and the Deputy Undersecretary for Management. He wanted a briefing on the killing of our Ambassador in Nicosia. We were in touch by phone with the embassy and were going back and forth on what had happened. I think we were in direct touch with them as soon as the demonstrations started and were actually on the phone with them when the shot fired came through the office window and killed him. Mr. Eagleburger called the watch to get briefed and I was the guy who happened to answer the phone. So, he said, what's going on? I told him. The conversation lasted maybe 10 minutes. Several weeks later, maybe even a month or a couple of months later, I don't quite remember, there was an opening for a special assistant position on Eagleburger's staff and he called me and asked if I was interested? I went down to his office and we talked for maybe 15 or 20 minutes. He said, right, the job's yours. I said, no, I have a job. I'm supposed to be in this job until such and such a date. He said, don't worry about that, you can start tomorrow. I don't think things are done quite that way these days, but in those days it was not unusual for things to happen that way. All of a sudden I left the operations center and became a special assistant to Larry Eagleburger. There were five or six of us on the staff. Pat Theros did most of the staff work for Eagleburger in his Deputy Undersecretary for Management capacity. I did most of the staff work for him in his capacity as executive assistant to the Secretary. Bill Galloway, Fred Spots, and Don Bouchard were the more senior members of that staff.

Pat Theros was subsequently replaced by Eric Boswell. Earl Sohm was also on the staff as a policy advisor.

Q: You did this from what '75?

EGAN: I did this from the spring of '75 until the summer of '77. When the Carter administration came in. Peter Tarnoff came on as the Executive Secretary. Peter asked me if I would stay on the Secretary's staff after Larry Eagleburger and the others left for a couple of years. I didn't want to do that. I was ready to go back overseas. I had said to Eagleburger that I had my eye on the number two job in the political section in Lisbon. Again times have changed, he said, "done," and so I left the 7th floor job in the spring of '77, did Portuguese language training, and arrived in Lisbon in July to work in the political section. Frank Carlucci was the Ambassador and Herb Okun was the DCM.

Q: Let's go back to the '75 to '77 with Larry Eagleburger. In the first place before I forget it, how did this impact on your family because I know, I mean.

EGAN: It was very difficult.

Q: Yes, I mean, this is probably the major consideration in taking one of these jobs, what's it going to do to sort of your family life?

EGAN: The advantage of the work in the Ops Center was, surprisingly enough, when you do shift work, you do your eight hours and you leave and the office doesn't call you at home. I actually found that I had a tremendous amount of wonderful time at home at odd times of the day when I was doing shift work in the Ops Center. When I went to work for Larry Eagleburger I would be in the office at 6:00 or 6:30 in the morning and it was often 11:00 at night until I got home, six days a week, sometimes seven. It was very difficult on the family. Our kids were young; both in elementary school in Tacoma Park in those days, but it was stressful. The upside of it was there were fewer restraints on overtime and it was not unusual for me to earn almost the equivalent of my annual salary in overtime. Was it necessary? Well, I don't know if it was necessary, but it was the way it worked.

Q: It's the way it's stayed.

EGAN: It's the way the office worked and it was very exciting. Although we were all sometimes really dog tired we were working on some really interesting issues with some extraordinary people.

Q: Yes, well, let's talk about Larry Eagleburger and your observation of his relationship with Henry Kissinger and maybe some of the issues.

EGAN: Well, I don't know, I don't know of anybody who I thought had a closer and more personal relationship with the Secretary than Eagleburger did. It was not always an easy relationship. There were times when Larry Eagleburger was a dissident voice with the Secretary on one issue or another. It was not uncommon for the Secretary to get frustrated or irritated with somebody and turn to Larry Eagleburger and say, get this guy out of here. I don't want to see this man again, fire him - something very impetuous in the heat of the moment. Larry would find a way to sort of take the rough edges off that or to obviously not to fire whoever the individual was, but to make sure that there was a period in which that person didn't cross the Secretary's screen very often and then maybe slowly reintroduce him to the operations upstairs. I think he often was a real buffer between some of the pressures and frustrations that the Secretary was trying to deal with and the impact of those on the rest of the building. I think by and large people in the Department felt that if you had a real problem that involved the Secretary, Larry Eagleburger was the guy you could go to and say, I need some help on figuring this out or how to do this or how to approach this with the Secretary. It was not unlike what a good DCM does. You take the heavy bad stuff from the guy above you and somehow manage it in such a way that the rest of the operation survives and is not hammered into the ground. At the same time you take a lot of the stuff that comes up from downstairs and try to manage it in such a way with the Secretary that it comes out right as far as the institution of the Foreign Service or the Department of State is concerned.

A good DCM if he's doing his job gets it from below and gets it from above and somehow keeps the machinery working. More than anybody on the 7th floor, Larry Eagleburger fulfilled that function with the Secretary. I admired him as a man of great principal as well because when he had a problem with something he made no bones about tackling it head on. He won some of those and he lost some of those. He was intensely loyal to the office of the Secretary and to the person of Henry Kissinger. I think the Secretary relied on him a lot, much more heavily than any wiring diagram of the Department of State would ever show and certainly much more heavily than anybody simply in the job of undersecretary for management would ever presume. He was a real confidant. I think the Secretary trusted him. I think the Secretary knew damn well sometimes when he said off with his head that there wasn't going to be a public execution at the C Street entrance.

I think Eagleburger was the most important personality on the 7th floor in those days. I think he had the respect of the Service and the Department and the Hill and the White House staff and the intelligence community. I never saw him deal too much with DOD, but he was key to those other relationships. Sometimes in a rather informal and non-institutional way.

Q: Did you see Eagleburger work to deal with the problem of Henry Kissinger would often have one on one meetings with Ingersoll or somebody else and I'm told that often nothing came out. Notes didn't come back, so somebody trying to deal with Soviet affairs didn't know what the Secretary was saying.

EGAN: Eagleburger would know. I think on occasion Eagleburger would get more out of the Secretary on those meetings than even Joe Sisco or Bill Hyland. Certainly more than Deputy Secretary Ingersoll. I think Larry was often a primary confidential source on those meetings that others had not sat in on. When the Secretary came to the Department in '73, at first he was both the National Security Advisor and the Secretary of State. I think he came to the Department somewhat suspicious and skeptical of the Foreign Service and so dealt most comfortably with a very small group. Larry Eagleburger for my money was the principal among the members of that very small group. Over time that changed. I don't know of a Secretary of State who has pushed the Department and the Foreign Service harder than Kissinger did. I also think he got some extraordinarily good work out of us during his tenure as Secretary of State. When he said goodbye at C Street entrance he cried, so there was an evolution in his feeling about that institution over time. I think Eagleburger was an important part of that evolution in Kissinger's thinking because you know Larry was a Foreign Service Officer, but he wasn't a Foreign Service Officer. He's not unlike people like Frank Carlucci who were Foreign Service Officers and then were something else or something more. Larry was always something more, but he understood profoundly the strengths, the weaknesses, and the needs of both the institution of the Foreign Service and the Department of State on which I think Kissinger came to rely more than maybe a lot of people recognized.

Q: You were an assistant here. Was there an apparatus that often happens when you have a dynamic, but rather secretive person like Henry Kissinger who dealt with sort of an apparatus that sort of develops around people, not bypass the Secretary, but get the Secretary to do things and to operate because this is really, I mean were you part of this?

EGAN: Oh, yes. Sure. Yes, I had the advantage, on some occasions it was a disadvantage, of being down the hall. Dave Gompert and Al Adams were the key staff guys in the Secretary's front office and of course Jerry Bremer then after a little while came on as the executive assistant at which point Larry Eagleburger kind of dropped that role. George Springsteen was the Executive Secretary of the Department and these were still the days in which the executive secretary was a civil servant supergrade. Springsteen had been the Executive Secretary forever and had this enormous institutional presence and authority that the Secretary and some of the other mavens of the 7th floor spent a lot of time going around. They thought George Springsteen represented the sharp point of the pyramid of the institution of the Department of State and he was civil service, he wasn't Foreign Service. The Secretary and some others did not feel the need to share things with George Springsteen, but of course George Springsteen had an abiding institutional and personal appetite for all of that information. There were telegraphic channels of communication that we ran outside the Department's normal communications setup. They were called HAKTO and TOHAKs. HAKTO meaning a message from Henry A. Kissinger to somebody or TOHAK meaning a message from somebody to Henry A. Kissinger. I think that channel was run through the White House sit room. We used to be the keeper of that channel so when the Secretary was traveling and if Eagleburger was in Washington, the TOHAKs and HAKTOs ran through him. If George Springsteen the Executive Secretary of the Department or Joe Sisco the Undersecretary for Political Affairs, or Bob Ingersoll the Deputy Secretary of State, or whoever it was wanted to see this traffic, they had to physically come to Larry's office. Wes Egan would give them the file and they would read what they were allowed to read and then they would go away. It wouldn't surprise me if such a system in some form still exists today, but it was the ultimate sort of back channel. In cases like that, Eagleburger was often the one to decide who needed to see it and controlled the channel going back to the Secretary as well. Sometimes it was used to discuss the most important and sensitive policy issues and sometimes it carried the most mundane personnel or personal gossip and comments about people. Parts of it were actually quite juicy, but it was very strictly controlled. A lot of information flowed in it that didn't flow in other channels.

Q: Did you feel like you were a note taker at the court of Louis IV or something like that?

EGAN: Well, there were occasions, yes. I remember one, it didn't involve the Secretary directly, it involved Larry Eagleburger and Bill Rogers who was the Assistant Secretary for Latin American Affairs. It involved what in the late '70s were still secret meetings with the Cubans in New York. I wound up as the note taker at one of those meetings which went on for a day or a day and a half. I think it was a day. I think I was a full day. That product, those notes never dropped into regular channels in the Department, but they went to the Secretary, and Joe Sisco and to Bill Hyland, the Director of INR.

Q: What were you talking about?

EGAN: Prisoner release issues, some embargo issues, and tentative steps toward normalization. I don't think it lasted very long and I think it fell back into the deep freeze not too long afterwards, but it was one of those blips on the screen of the U.S. Cuban relations.

Q: Did you get any feel for the heads, the assistant secretaries or head of the geographic bureaus? Did they feel they were kind of out of the loop or being somewhat excluded?

EGAN: The extraordinary thing about that job was that it also involved doing things for a lot of the most senior people in the building. Assistant secretaries would occasionally come to me and say, did Eagleburger do this or did he do that? Has he talked to the Secretary about this? Has he done this or has he done that? Or, would it be useful to talk to him about this? That kind of stuff. I think one of the problems that most of us who worked on the 7th floor in those days had was to try to maintain a reasonable understanding that we were useful to certain people simply because of the chair we sat in, not because we were necessarily God's gift to the Foreign Service. I remember feeling particularly comfortable with Bill Hyland, Roy Atherton, who was the Assistant Secretary for NEA, Art Hartman who was the Assistant Secretary for European Affairs, Frank Wisner on Sisco's staff, and Bob Duemling who was the Executive Assistant to the Deputy Secretary. There was certainly a staff network, but there were also assistant secretaries who had close relationships with those of us in staff positions on the 7th floor because we were useful to them.

Q: Did you get any feel for the White House staff at that time?

EGAN: At my level, not much. I remember only one meeting that I was in again in a sort of note taker capacity between Larry Eagleburger and Brent Scowcroft and I don't even remember what the issue was. I just remember the thrill of being in the National Security Advisor's corner office for the first time. Sitting there quietly in a corner scribbling like mad and then rushing back to my own office to try to reduce my scribbles to some sort of coherent record of the meeting. I honestly don't recall the issue at the time. I think I probably did the least amount of traveling of the S staff in those days. In fact I think I only made one overseas trip with the Secretary. It was a trip that was supposed to start in London and then go on to Brussels and then Moscow. We were in London for several days and Larry Eagleburger and I both came down with food poisoning. Tragically, we had to spend the next three days confined to a large three bedroom suite in Claridges Hotel while the rest of the party went on. Those were the days when the Secretary stayed at Claridges. I wound up flying back to Washington when I was able to travel, but that was the only overseas trip I made with the Secretary, so I never became a part of the traveling Kissinger team. The fact that I was physically attached to Eagleburger even though I was carried on the S staff also was a slightly odd position from an institutional perspective on the 7th floor, sometimes a great asset. Sometimes a little bit of a liability.

Larry was also very involved in the speech writing process for the Secretary. He would spend quite a bit of time working through sometimes several dozen drafts. Charlie Hill was a senior member of the policy planning staff and Charlie and Peter Rodman were probably the principal thinkers about what the speech ought to accomplish. Their product often went to Larry before it went anywhere else. We sometimes went through a dozen or more drafts. People used to jokingly say the problem with writing speeches for the Secretary was that he kept moving the verbs to the end of the sentence. I think it was Larry Eagleburger who actually got the Secretary to pronounce the word Kemo Sabe correctly at some point, but that was also sort of an off-line process. Charlie Hill was doing it not because he was policy planning, but because he had a particular talent. Peter Rodman was a very special personality and Peter's involvement in it was unique in that way as well. It was a very intense and intimate experience.

The three policy issues I remember most clearly from those days. One was what to do about the Portuguese revolution. My winding up in Lisbon after that tour on the 7th floor is ironic in a sense because it was a period of great disagreement from the Secretary and Frank Carlucci with respect to what was the proper relationship to have with the Portuguese Socialist Party at the time of the revolution; the issue of the Soviet's microwave irradiation of the embassy in Moscow; and Walt Stoessel's health and the subsequent epidemiological study of Embassy staff on the effects of that irradiation. Third was the issue of what in those days was called the AAFSW Forum Report. It was the American Association of Foreign Service Wives and it was in part a reaction to the changes during Bill Macomber's time in which spouses were effectively made non-persons.

Q: Yes, they were no longer rated.

EGAN: They were no longer rated. There was no longer a confidential section in the officers' evaluation report. They were in some ways no longer part of the official community and there was a reaction in the spouse community. AAFSW in the early to mid '70s went through a period of intensive discussion with its membership about what the role of the spouse really should be in a more modern world and perhaps more importantly, how the Department needed to relate to spouses and dependents. It was from that report which was submitted to Larry Eagleburger in his capacity as Undersecretary for Management that the office of what was first called the Family Liaison Office and is now called the Community Liaison Office evolved. That whole concept was born in that AAFSW Forum Report to the undersecretary for management. My wife was the principal drafter and editor of that report which is why it occupied a fair amount of my time.

Q: Now on the Portuguese revolution, I've interviewed Frank Carlucci and what, what role did Eagleburger play in this? As I recall Henry Kissinger tended to be almost to write to Portuguese socialist party off as being cut them off from everything and Carlucci said we can work with it and all.

EGAN: This was one of those quiet mediating roles Larry played. He was not a major player in that issue, but he helped to manage the disagreement between the Secretary and Ambassador Carlucci. Carlucci thought the best defense against a strong Portuguese Communist Party were the socialists and that Mario Soares, as the leader of the Portuguese Socialist Party in exile, was our best bet with this NATO ally if we were to bottle up the resurgence of the Portuguese communist party in a post-revolutionary environment. Carlucci was right. The Secretary was wrong and it made for a lot of bad blood. Whether that was one of the reasons I was interested in serving in Lisbon I can't quite recall, but certainly when I arrived there, or when the Embassy was first told not asked, but told that I would be coming to fill that position in the political section, I think Frank Carlucci and Herb Okun knowing as they did that I was coming out of the Secretary's office were a little startled. But it was not a problem. Some years later, after the Secretary had left public office, he was giving a speech in Lisbon and said he had been wrong. A lot of people hadn't heard Henry Kissinger admit that sort of thing in a while. Of course Carlucci is the man against which every ambassador to Portugal forever will always be compared. I was not, it was one of those many issues that went back and forth across your desk in the course of the day, but not something I was particularly involved in.

Q: In the microwaving problem of our embassy in Moscow, I mean it was a real concern because the Soviets had put, I don't know whether this was done for health reasons or done for just to pick up speech emanations or something. How did we view it?

EGAN: We were surprised to discover it. We were worried about the health implications for the ambassador and his staff. It was focused only on a couple of specific areas of the embassy including the Ambassador's suite and Ambassador Stoessel had really serious health problems and there was a real question as to whether or not his leukemia was the result of this irradiation. There were enough people who had served in Moscow who had serious health problems to raise a question as to whether there was something there. How soon in the process this was realized I don't recall, but the irradiation, I don't think we thought the irradiation was the cause of health problems. The irradiation was to read emanations from IBM Selectric typewriters. It was an intelligence gathering initiative. I'm not enough of an expert to describe this, but it involved reading vibrations off of the glass windows. There was an epidemiological study of folks who had served in Moscow over several decades to see if there was any relationship between what we knew about the bombardment of the building by microwaves and the health problems that people had suffered. In the end I don't think a direct link was ever drawn, but they had a serious problem managing this issue because of the suspicion on the part of the embassy staff that their health was somehow being jeopardized and that the USG was unwilling to confront the Soviets on it because of the desire to preserve the bilateral relationship. A lot of Larry's time on that issue was devoted to managing that issue with the embassy staff and the media.

Q: Oh, I know and also I can just see I don't know if it happened or not, but somebody saying, well you know we're doing the same thing to the Soviet embassy here in Washington. I don't know whether its true, but I mean this is often what you find out when you start doing these things. Usually if one side is doing it, the other side is probably; this is not a gentleman's game.

EGAN: This was I think during the period in which the negotiations were also underway for the location of our new embassy in Moscow and the Soviets desire to build a new chancery on Massachusetts Avenue below the National Cathedral. We got the bottom of a bowl in Moscow and the Russians got one of the highest points in the district. Something's wrong here.

Q: Yes.

EGAN: Herb Pollack was the name of the doctor. They also wrestled with the problem of leaks in the Department. There was an abortive effort to try and find who on the embassy staff was talking to the press about the issue and about how we were trying to respond to it. I think they finally gave up. It was a nasty business.

Q: Well, I think this is probably a good place to stop and we'll pick this up next time in 1977 when you were off to Portugal.

Today is the 11th of February, 2004. Wes, you're off to, let's see, just to back up. It was 1977, wasn't it?

EGAN: 1977.

Q: Where had you been before?

EGAN: I was in the spring of 1977 I was on Larry Eagleburger's staff. I was doing the S side of his staffing, the side of his staffing that related to the office of the Secretary of State. Eric Boswell was doing M the management side of his staffing because in those days for a brief period Eagleburger actually filled two positions: one as executive assistant to the Secretary and the other as Undersecretary for Management. He had a sort of bifurcated staff and I ran the S side of his staff and Eric Boswell who went on to become the assistant secretary for diplomatic security, ran the M side.

Q: Let me stop here.

EGAN: Eric was and remains a very good friend. He was the last career Foreign Service Officer that filled the position of the Assistant Secretary for Diplomatic Security. Peter Tarnoff asked me if I would stay on in the Secretary's office for another year or two and I said no thank you. I'd been on the 7th floor for three years and I thought it was time to get back to the field. The Portuguese revolution had taken place in '74 and '75. In fact I was still in South Africa when the coup in Lisbon actually took place. Frank Carlucci, Ambassador Frank Carlucci had been sent to Lisbon shortly after the revolution and was dealing with how we should respond to a leftist government in Portugal, one of the founding members of NATO and a country that via the Azores was also a base rights country. After the revolution all sorts of people were coming back to Lisbon. Mario Soares returned from exile in Paris and all sorts of folks were floating back. Frank Carlucci, Herb Okun, his Deputy Chief of Mission and Rick Melton, political counselor, were dealing with important issues and I wanted to be part of that team. This was before the days of the open assignments system and I was in a privileged enough position in Eagleburger's office that I could make it known that I wanted to go to Lisbon to be the number two in the political section and it happened; the assignment was paneled and the orders were cut. Ambassador Carlucci was I think at the outset a little bit curious about the assignment since I was coming to him from the Secretary's staff and he and Secretary Kissinger had had several very public disagreements about how to handle relations with Portugal. Ambassador Carlucci turned out to be right. Secretary Kissinger turned out to be wrong.

Q: You weren't Kissinger's, well, we'll talk about that in a minute, but you were there from when to when?

EGAN: I was in Lisbon from the summer of '77 for what was supposed to be a four year assignment, but I left after two. I left in the summer of '79.

Q: Had you had any Portuguese?

EGAN: Nope. I went to Portuguese language training prior to the assignment and got my 3/3 language rating, but I had no previous Portuguese experience. I had no previous European experience. In fact Lisbon was only my second overseas posting. I was probably totally unqualified for the job.

Q: That's the Foreign Service.

EGAN: That's right.

Q: That's why we hire people and go through a selection process. How would you, what was when you arrived in 1977, what was the situation in Portugal?

EGAN: The issue I think that preoccupied us was what was the best defense against the possibility of the Portuguese Communist Party taking the reigns of government. Ambassador Carlucci's argument was that the best defense against the communists was to back the Socialists rather than to support the Social Democrats or the Christian Democrats. I think Secretary Kissinger and likely other members of the administration were of the view that given the importance of the Azores to us, that great aircraft carrier parked in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, that our interests would be better served if we backed a more center right party. That was I think the fundamental issue at that moment.

A secondary, but also very important issue was the extent to which we were going to manage to retain our base rights at Lajes Field in the Azores. Lajes was a Portuguese base that the U.S. military had used since the Second World War. I remember actually as a kid flying on a military air transport plane from Westover Field in Massachusetts to Tripoli, Libya stopping in the Azores for fuel in what must have been 1951 or 1952. The Army, Air Force and the Navy all used Lajes. The joke those days was that the Army drove the ocean-going tugs, the Navy flew the planes, and the Air Force mowed the grass. The issue of retaining those base rights and what it would cost us, what the quid pro quo would be with this new political environment in Portugal, was our second most important issue.

The third priority was the impact on Portugal for the collapse of the oldest colonial regime in Africa. Soon after the revolution, approximately a million Portuguese from those colonies, many if not most of them born and raised there, returned to Portugal. In the space of a year and a half, Portugal absorbed the equivalent of about 10% of its population and these were in most cases people who had returned to Lisbon with nothing. The weight of that returning population was an enormous economic strain on Portugal which in those days was I think the most undeveloped and probably the second or third poorest country in Europe. Yet it was a founding member of NATO and a base rights country. It was a place of strategic importance and of course it was known even then that down the road the issues would arise with respect to Portuguese membership in the European Community. How the politics of it would work out, how our base rights agreement and access would be preserved were key policy issues for us. I think during my time there Portugal was the only country in Europe that was a recipient of American bilateral economic assistance, \$80 to \$100 million a year. The Embassy was a busy place to work. The embassy's work was followed closely in Washington; the issues were visible; the ambassador was dynamic; the outcome was important to the USG. It was an exciting place to work.

Q: Well, before we move to kind of what you were doing, when you got there from your colleagues and on your own, how did you view the various political parties? Where were they particularly from American interests?

EGAN: Well, the answer to that question at the time was not particularly clear. Figuring it out was a large part of the embassy's work. We needed to understand how party personalities and party platforms would evolve after the heavy hand of the dictatorship was lifted and normal political life re-emerged. It emerged very quickly. The fear was that if the Portuguese Communist Party took control of the assembly that previous arrangements important to us, such as base rights, would be almost impossible to sustain. Also, there was a NATO command just outside of Lisbon that alternated between British and U.S. commanders. There was concern that if the Portuguese communist party came to dominate parliamentary political life that those strategic assets would be jeopardized. People were very unclear as to where the Portuguese Socialist Party would fit in. Mario Soares had been in exile for 10 years. We suspected the Socialists might cause us some difficulty in retaining our base rights access and that the party would also be trying to attack some of the major infrastructure and socioeconomic problems in Portugal after decades of neglect and dictatorship. The Christian Democrats were probably even less known to us at that point. I don't recall there being a Christian Democratic political elite in exile. Then finally you had the Portuguese Social Democratic party; the PSD led by a very dynamic man named Sa Carneiro who was killed in a plane accident some years later. The PSD was in the mainstream, European social democratic framework, but the fact that most of the political leadership of these parties had not had an overt expression in Portuguese political life over several decades of dictatorship meant that there was a lot of groping around getting to know these players and getting to know where they might stand on the domestic, regional, and strategic issues that were of primary importance to us at the time. My role in the political section was to focus on the PSD. I made it my business not only to get to know the younger technocrats in the party who were building a party organization after many years, but to begin to know the leadership of the party which was a wonderful experience for me. I made lots of good friends in the party and in Portugal in the process which was useful to me almost 10 years later when I returned to Portugal as DCM and the Social Democrats were the ruling party.

It gave me the excuse to travel all over. It forced me to actually become a Portuguese speaker. If you didn't speak Portuguese or French, you could not do business in Portugal in those days. English was just not a language you heard on the street. It wasn't spoken by the elites and although I got to Lisbon with what FSI considered a strong 3/3 in Portuguese, it was my first experience in language training and from the day I arrived I felt like a linguistic cripple. It was curious to us that Portugal in general actually seemed much more foreign than South Africa had felt. I'm sure a big part of that was language. The adjustment process in Portugal was a difficult one. Portuguese is a wonderful language. I can't stand language training. I've never enjoyed it. I don't have much of an aptitude for languages. It's always been a struggle, but the nature of my work really forced me to become a pretty respectable Portuguese speaker.

We lived about 40 minutes outside of the city center in Estoril. In those days, the Embassy was in an old apartment house on Avenue Duque de Loulĩ½. With minimal security, we barely had a secure conference room, but as political officers we lived on the street. Some of us had better Portuguese than others, but everybody worked the street everyday. Herb Okun, the DCM, taught me an enormous amount about how to be a political officer. Frank Carlucci himself was very welcoming. I was very sorry to see him leave about a year later to come back to Washington to be the DCI. In fact we had a long conversation about that one evening just by some circumstance I don't remember, I wound up in his office alone and he was debating whether to come back to Washington to take that job. I said to him a fairly presumptuous thing for a young Foreign Service Officer to say, I said, "Well, I would think that if you went back to be the Director of Central Intelligence it would probably queer any chances you might have to be an ambassador again." He looked at me and said, "Well, that's all right. I've been an ambassador once. I don't need to do it again." It was a wonderful tour for me. I was less fond of the folks that replaced him.

Q: Who was that?

EGAN: The ambassador who replaced him was Richard Bloomfield who I certainly had no personal reason to have any difficulty with, but as it turned out, he and Frank Carlucci had served together in Brazil and apparently disliked each other intensely. I think Ambassador Bloomfield might have been the economic counselor and Frank Carlucci the political counselor in Brazil. For whatever reason, these two gentlemen did not get along. Well, Frank Carlucci by that time had already established the benchmark by which future ambassadors would be judged. Frank became the sort of gold standard as far as the Portuguese were concerned as to what it was to be an effective American ambassador in Portugal. Ambassador Bloomfield, like I think everybody that followed Frank Carlucci, was judged by that standard. Ambassador Bloomfield I think felt that well, if Frank Carlucci had done it that way, then we're not going to do it that way anymore, we're going to do it this way. For a junior political officer, this was a difficult adjustment to make. I think it was a difficult adjustment for Ambassador Bloomfield too. They all got past that and I think he had a successful tour as ambassador and is fondly remembered, but like every other American ambassador people will say, oh, yes he's a terrific guy, wonderful ambassador, lovely man, but he's not Frank Carlucci.

Q: The episode with Frank Carlucci whom I've interviewed in Portugal he stands as one of the highlights of American diplomacy of an ambassador standing up to the Secretary of State at a very crucial time.

EGAN: It wasn't easy to do.

Q: This is not a minor little matter, I mean this is a major matter affecting NATO, affecting Europe, the whole thing and he was right, but it was a difficult period and he did it right. This sort of stands out.

EGAN: He did it stubbornly and there was nothing secret about it. The Portuguese knew what was going on and the Socialist Party was the ultimate Portuguese beneficiary of the position that Frank Carlucci took. When Soares then became prime minister and later president of Portugal, that only reinforced the affection and respect that many Portuguese had and still have for Carlucci. Carlucci had a very sharp embassy team. Herb Okun and Rick Melton were key elements in not only making the political judgment that they made, but then sustaining that judgment in the face of pretty significant opposition at the Washington end. He was a fun guy to work for during that period.

Q: Herb and I came into the Foreign Service together. We were in the same A100 course. Herb had had problems when he was in Brazil. He was I think he was very, extremely bright. He was one of the.

EGAN: A superb linguist, a polymath.

Q: I think in Brazil from what I gather he was too young and too authoritarian. I mean you know this is one of these things that got a lot of peoples' back up.

EGAN: You mean he may have been too bright for his own good?

Q: Too bright for his own good. How did this translate into when he was older and all?

EGAN: I first met him when he was DCM in Lisbon. He was terrific to me as a mentor, as a constructive critic. I think in general he was terrific with junior officers. He was all over the Embassy. He was a man that I felt comfortable enough and familiar enough with to plop down in his office and sort of think out loud and get really smart thoughtful considered reactions from him. He was a superb drafter. He knew Frank Carlucci, but he wasn't Frank Carlucci. He was a very different personality. Herb is probably the only; he's one of two people who I met in my career that I think I would really consider brilliant. Herb Okun is one and Dick Walters was the other, Vernon Walters was the other.

Q: I have to throw with Chas Freeman.

EGAN: I never worked with Chas. Herb, I thought was a superb DCM as far as the mission staff was concerned, including the CIA station, which was a sizable station in those days, and the military staff, both in Lisbon and in the Azores. He was an outstanding number two and had the sort of relationship with Carlucci that I think a good DCM has to have. If he thought something was going wrong or the boss was headed off in a funny direction or this just did seem right, he never had any hesitation walking into Frank Carlucci's office and saying, "Frank this is ridiculous. We can't do this, that's not right." He was not only fearless in doing that, but I think he considered it one of his obligations as Frank Carlucci's deputy. I liked him enormously and stayed in touch with him over the years and I think everybody in that embassy felt the same way.

Q: Well, let's talk a bit about the social democrats. You've got the socialists who I take it are more or less the main focus of the embassy at that time and you were given sort of the.

EGAN: The ambassador's view was that the best defense against the extreme left meaning the Portuguese communist party was a solid working relationship with the socialists so the policy priority made the socialist party the focus of our attentions. But there was an equally strong feeling that we needed to have well informed positive relationships with the Social Democrats and the Christian Democrats as well. My particular focus as the political officer as number two in the political section was to try to begin to develop those relationships with the PSD.

Q: Where did the Social Democrats of Portugal fit within the Portuguese scheme of things? What was different between the socialists and then how did they fit to the socialist social democratic parties, labor party movements in Europe which were also supporting this.

EGAN: Mario Soares was a very prominent member of the Socialist International and many of his senior staff, the one that I remember in particular, Rui Mateus, was very prominent within the socialist international and spent a lot of time cultivating the socialist, the Portuguese Socialist party's relationships with the European and Latin and South American socialist parties. Sometimes people in Washington worried a little bit about that, but it was very much a part of their identification with the socialist international and the sort of community of socialist parties worldwide. Along the political spectrum going from left to right, you would have the Portuguese Communist party, the Portuguese Socialist party, the Portuguese Social Democratic party, slightly to the right of center and the Christian Democrats to the right of that.

Q: Where would the Portuguese who came back from Africa fit in this?

EGAN: It's kind of hard to generalize about a million people, but in the late '70s if you had taken a poll and I don't know of any polls taken in those days, you would probably have found more of them on the center and center right and right than you would the center left and left, meaning a greater identification probably with the social democratic party and the Christian democrats than with the socialists or the Portuguese communist party.

Q: This would of course fall into line along with them.

EGAN: Absolutely. Those million people who returned, were within the space of five years completely reintegrated into domestic Portuguese political and economic life. In fact, as the dictatorship fell away, the people who were opening new banks, opening small business, opening large businesses, attracting foreign investment, commercializing agriculture, modernizing the wine sector, investing in cork, all of those sort of entrepreneurial business opportunities, were more often those who had returned from overseas, not those who had stayed at home.

Q: Yes, I mean this is America.

EGAN: I think many of them became the engine of Portuguese economic development in the '80s with Portugal's accession to the European Community. I doubt that would have happened as quickly as it did had it not been for the energy and imagination of many of those who in many cases had lost everything in the colonies when the revolution occurred in Lisbon. Most of them would have lined up closer to the Social Democrats and the Christian Democrats than they would have to the Socialist or Communist party. I think a lot of Portuguese voters in the late '70s also felt that the best defense against a resurgent communist party at least at the outset lay with the socialists and that's why Mario Soares became prime minister and ultimately president.

Q: This wasn't your focus, you still obviously were dealing with it. What was your impression of the communist party? From what I gather their leader was.

EGAN: A fossil. A Stalinist remnant.

Q: Which was fortunate for us. He was one of these iron teeth guys.

EGAN: Yes, I think, I don't think the potential for a Portuguese Communist Party domination of Portuguese political life after the revolution was as serious a threat as a lot of people in Washington thought it was. The Communists greatest source of support was in the shipyards and in the agricultural sector. The Party dominated the ship building yards in the Lisbon harbor and in Setubal, the major industrialized city south of Lisbon, for a very long time. Portugal was an almost feudal place and it felt that way up to the '70s, up to the time of the revolution itself. There were also significant pockets of Communist support of the military, particularly the army. Perhaps first and foremost because of their sustained opposition to Salazar and Caetano over the decades of the dictatorship and of course their role as well in several of the African colonies with the beginning of the armed struggle. The arms struggle in Africa against the Portuguese began in Guinea-Bissau. It's not hard at all to find some of the linkages between the Portuguese Communist party and elements of the resistance to Portuguese rule in those colonies going back to the mid to early '50s. I think the rebellion against the Portuguese in Guinea-Bissau started in 1953 or 1954 under Luis Cabral who had his own relationships with the Portuguese Communist party.

Q: How did, I mean, let's talk, here you are this is a political officer there, you were saying you were all out in the streets. What would you be doing? How would this work?

EGAN: Well, I'll speak from my own experience. I had four or five other really talented colleagues in that section, but in terms of the PSD, the portfolio that I carried, I made it my business to focus on the Party at different levels. I got to know the mayors, the city council chairs, the local political boss in large towns like Braganca in the north, and in small towns out in the Alentejo near the Spanish border. They were wonderfully open and receptive to a visitor from the American Embassy. It might have been some years since anybody from the Embassy had visited and wanted to talk to the mayor about his problems, regional issues, the economy, etc. They were very open, very accessible and very gracious as you tried to do this work in Portuguese. That of course is what got you out, or at least got me out into the provinces.

The second level were the technocrats in the party. They tended to be close to my age. They were the men and the women mostly in their '30s who were trained as statisticians, who were grassroots party organizers, the ones who would make sure if there was going to be a rally that the busses got there and the hands went up in the audience and the loud speaker system was there and the banners were up on the wall. Many of them were volunteers, but many of them also paid party employees. One of them was a young man who went on to become the party's leading pollster, and we actually brought him to the States on an IV grant to observe the way in which we conducted polls, political polls and advertising polls in the United States. The third level were those who were probably also still in their '30s who were in the party leadership's inner circle. One was Antonio Gouveia who was killed with the PSD leader Sa Carneiro in a plane crash in January of 1980 and whose younger sister has until recently been the minister of culture. Gouveia was a close friend and his death was a source of great sadness to me. He had unlimited potential as a party activist and possibly even eventual party leader. The other was Rui Mateus, not in the social democratic party, but on the socialist party side, who I got to know simply because the Embassy had such extensive contacts and dealings with the Socialist Party. Rui had been with Soares in Paris in exile, had been Soares' international affairs chief, and had hoped very much that when the socialists took power in Portugal that he would become at least the foreign minister. That didn't happen and is one of the sources of his eventual falling out with Soares. Gouveia and Mateus were senior members of the inner circle of those two political parties in a period in Portuguese history in which anything was possible. They welcomed a relationship with Americans. They became in my case good friends in the process and they played key roles as partisan political advisors.

Q: This is tape four, side one with Wes Egan. Yes?

EGAN: It probably now sounds more methodical than it was at the time. I met Mario Soares many times when I was first in Portugal as a junior officer and then also later when he was prime minister and president, but he was not certainly a regular contact of mine. That level obviously was worked mostly by the ambassador, the political counselor, and the DCM.

Q: What were the people you contacted? What were they getting from you? The relationship.

EGAN: For the Social Democrats who hadn't had any particular relationship with American authorities, it was recognition that they were credible and influential players in the Portuguese political scene and that they were political leaders of value and influence; that we recognized their role in this evolving parliamentary democracy and would listen to them when they told us why they were different from the Socialists or why they were different from the Christian Democrats. At the personal level below the party leadership level we were also in the process of identifying future leaders. The international visitor program was a principal tool to get those in their 20s and 30s to the States to expose them to our own domestic political life and how it worked politically and at the operational level. It's hard to recall how undeveloped many of those aspects of political life were in Portugal, not just compared to the United States, but compared to the rest of Europe and probably compared to most countries in the Western Hemisphere. As it evolved of course, our relationship with the Portuguese government has been very good over the years since then. But this was a stage in which the personal, substantive, and the operational relationships with these parties was coming together and growing and evolving in a way that obviously would never have been possible in the days prior to the revolution. We were cultivating people and you know, I was lucky enough to be able to go back to Portugal 10 years later as chargé d'affaires because we had no ambassador in Portugal and the guys that I had known in the Socialist Party and the Social Democratic Party 10 years before, were now people in positions of authority. Just from a very narrow personal perspective I got a return on that investment and they got a return on that investment because they could walk through my door or pick up the telephone and call me, as somebody not only in a particular official position in the American Embassy in Lisbon in the late '80s, but somebody they actually knew and had known from before. That was great.

Q: Were you, I sometimes have the vision of all the socialist parties, I mean the governments of Europe sending out their representatives and you're all scurrying around doing the same thing. I mean did you find that the European countries, France, Germany, Scandinavians, or the labor party in Britain, were they doing things?

EGAN: Well, they all had I mean you've got all kinds of interparliamentary relationships in the European context and in the case of the socialists you had not only the sort of umbrella organization of the socialist international, but you also had relationships between the Portuguese socialist party and the British labor party and the French socialists and the Italians, yes, of course. You also had it with trade unions and labor movements and we played in that game too. The only other embassy in Lisbon that I remember in the late '70s being particularly active in the way we were active were the British. Not the French. Nobody ever paid any attention to the Italians. The Spanish were disliked of course.

The British were the only ones who were really on the street to the extent that we were. It's interesting about Portugal and Spain. If you look at the border between those two countries it's as if you've got two countries that touch each other back to back, not face to face, but back to back. The Spanish have traditionally looked to Central Europe with respect to their political and economic associations. The Portuguese have always looked outward to the Atlantic and especially to the UK. Even our embassies in Madrid and Lisbon began to look out on the world in the same way. The two embassies had very little to do with each other. I remember there being very little communication between the embassy in Madrid and the embassy in Lisbon. So except for the British, I don't know of any other mission in town that kind of worked the streets the way the Americans did.

Q: How about the Soviets?

EGAN: The Soviets had the awkward position of being identified principally with a party that quickly became discredited and so their influence was not significant even as early as the late '70s. Not a major player and I mean part of that is because we are after all talking about a NATO ally.

Q: What about as a political officer did the CIA, was it much something on your horizon?

EGAN: Oh, yes, I had a very close relationship with the station. Ambassador Carlucci and Herb Okun insisted on close collaboration between the agency and the non-agency elements in the mission including the defense attaché's office. There was a great deal of sharing of information and an enormous amount of very effective coordination on reporting. In those days there was a very heavy domestic Portuguese focus for the agency so any of us who were preoccupied with the domestic scene, I mean we were working with colleagues on the station staff very closely and the reporting reflected that. In fact it was during that period that I learned the rules that ought to govern the way in which agency and non-agency reporting products are coordinated. The coordination process has got to work in such a way that coordination per se does not significantly delay the product. Two, you've got to make sure that the comments of the State political or economic officer or defense attaché representative focus on the substance of the report and not the source. The tendency I think among a lot of reporting officers is to say, I know who this guy is. I know where you got this and this fellow doesn't know his elbow from his left ear. That's just, you know, a worthless game. The comments should focus on the substance of the report, not on the source.

The third rule was not to let people commenting on the report use it as a vehicle for some other agenda or some other series of points or to express a view on some other issue that maybe they've not been able to get out through State channels.

Q: Did you find that you would be developing a contact and somebody would say, lay off that guy, this is the agency is taking care of this?

EGAN: That never happened to me in Lisbon. Never happened over the course of my career and there were many cases in which I knew that an intelligence officer and I both had a relationship with a source and we both knew we both had the relationship. It depended a little bit on whether the agency officer was nominal or integrated and it depended a great deal on the issues involved.

Q: It sounds like in Portugal at that time, there was a good healthy relationship.

EGAN: A very integrated team.

Q: Because many other places people have said, well, you know, they did their thing, we did our thing and there really wasn't any particularly at the junior level, I mean you weren't getting a chance to make your comments to review and all.

EGAN: At my first overseas assignment in Durban and there were no agency personnel. From Lisbon onward, I always had a very close working relationship with the station and military staff. Those relationships came easily to me. I worked for ambassadors who put a very high priority on a fully integrated mission staff and when I became an ambassador the first time I did the same. I think it's the only way to run an embassy. Frank Carlucci and Herb Okun put a very high priority on that sort of interagency cooperation and their successors, Dick Bloomfield and Ed Rowell, his DCM, did the same thing.

Q: Did you find any pressure or anything during the time you were there, I mean you'd been pretty far down the food chain, but still in the Portuguese American community in the United States.

EGAN: Pressure?

Q: Pressure or influence or what have you, cultural.

EGAN: Not particularly because most of the Portuguese community in the United States is from the Azores or Madeira. There were issues in the '70s about the extent of autonomy that the Azorean Regional Authority should have, particularly with respect to negotiating base rights issues in the Azores. In the '70s, the Portuguese "community" in the United States was not particularly organized. It was not a significant interest group on foreign policy issues.

Q: What about coverage of Madeira and the Azores?

EGAN: Well, we had a consulate general in the Azores, staffed by three Americans. In the '70s we had in addition to the Embassy in Lisbon, a consulate general in Oporto and in Ponta Delgado in the Azores. The consulate general in the Azores had responsibility for the American community that was part of the base at Lajes. They also handled shipping and commercial issues and they were also the principal interlocutors with the Azorean regional authority. We had very strong representation in those consulates both of which contributed to embassy reporting, had authority to report directly to Washington on their own in several areas that were a particular regional issues or concern, and were very much a part of the country team. They both provided a unique window into aspects of Portugal that you couldn't cover from Lisbon

Q: I think, correct me if I'm wrong, this is a little before your time.

EGAN: Most things were before my time.

Q: Well, time is moving on. When we were very worried about whether Portugal and all that, there was at least talk in the corridors about well, maybe the Azores will declare independence or something like that.

EGAN: Yes, this was as you say, before my time.

Q: Well, you were young. Did you have any feel for I mean sort of the young Portuguese, the ones who were coming up the ladder? Were they did you feel that they were getting energized and looking at Europe realizing that this is really a backwater, almost a fiefdom and boy now things are going?

EGAN: Absolutely. I think one of the things that energized so many of them was that the field was so open and that a big page of Portuguese history had been turned. Domestic political life was a wide open field for people with brains and energy. If you had talent you could rise in it. The political parties weren't as heavily encrusted with their own bureaucracies or their own entrenched elites as parties elsewhere in Europe or as parties in the United States might have become. If you were a young person with ideas and a good bit of stamina and a sense of responsibility and some courage as well, you could really make something of yourself in a country that on the one hand was desperately poor and undeveloped by European standards, on the other hand small enough that you could feel that you as an individual could really have an impact and three, that because of the revolution itself and the period of Portuguese history that it brought to a close, you were part of something in which most of the rest of the Western world had a real interest. People were paying attention to what was going on in Portugal. It wasn't a small poor undeveloped country that nobody was interested in; it was a small poor undeveloped country in which a lot of people were interested. You had people like me and my other colleagues in the American Embassy and our British colleagues who were eager to get to know you and eager to establish relationships and eager to understand what your political priorities might be or how the party that you were affiliated with might comport itself if it rose to positions of authority and power. It was a very exciting period. I'm sure that I had more access and probably more fun as the number two in the political section in Lisbon in the late '70s than friends of mine who were in the political section in Paris or in London or in Bonn, might have had. It was exciting. It was an exciting place to work and a wonderful country to live in.

Q: Did you find, you got there when the Carter administration was coming in. Did you find interest in the Carter phenomenon, human rights, other things or was this a country that was really looking toward its own business?

EGAN: Yes, we weren't there yet on those issues with the Portuguese. I think there was such a focus on the strategic issues and our own access that some of those elements that subsequently became associated so prominently with the Carter administration were not yet major preoccupations for us. I mean the whole feeling about Foreign Service work was all so different in those days. We were still doing telegrams on five or six ply green telegram forms, working out of a rickety old apartment building. In fact the political section still had a bathtub because it used to be a suite of apartments. You felt, Washington felt really far away. I'm sure the Ambassador and the DCM talked on the phone a lot to the Department, but I never did. We didn't spend time on the telephone talking to Washington. We got our marching orders from Ambassador Carlucci or his deputy every day or every other day or as often as we needed them and off we went. It felt probably more like what it used to be, to what it used to feel like working in an embassy before the war, before the Second World War than it did to what it's like to work in an American Embassy today. We had a sense of control. We had a lot of congressional visits. A lot of CODELS in the late '70s, all of which we seemed to have managed fairly well without an awful lot of guidance and hand holding by people back in Washington, so you really had the sense that you were out there. It seems odd to say, but a place like Lisbon, which is within a few miles of the westernmost extremity of the European continent, to say that we felt way out there, but we did.

The fact that I think I said a moment ago, it was a much, when I first got there, it was a much more alien feeling environment than South Africa had been. There were also some real physical hardships. I mean you couldn't buy dairy products. You couldn't find potatoes in the market. My son got meningitis while we were there and the attending Portuguese physician said, "For God sakes, don't take him to the hospital. We'll do a spinal tap here in his bedroom." His fear being that if we went to a Portuguese hospital, this was 1977, you would be sure to become ill. You'd come out of that hospital with an infection or you'd never come out of that hospital. The mortality rate was very high. The poverty rate was very high. The telephones didn't work. The things that you take for granted in a modern Western European country weren't there or were there and didn't function. That added to the sense that you were out there on a very foreign assignment and the fact that so many of the players were relatively new to us in those days I think only added to that feeling that made the whole thing a great adventure.

Q: Well, you left there in '79.

EGAN: I left there in '79. I was, I had grown a little bit unhappy at post after Ambassador Carlucci and Herb Okun left and the political counselor changed. It didn't feel like the place that I had wanted so desperately to go to in 1977 and so I very quietly made it known to a couple of people in Washington that if something interesting came up, not to forget about me. It must have been 1:00 or 2:00 in the morning when my telephone rang and it was Frank Wisner, one of the deputy executive secretaries in the Department. Frank told me that he had just been approved by the White House as the next ambassador to Zambia. Frank was going on about this at great length and I was thinking to myself, this is nice, Frank's an old friend, but why the hell is he calling me at 2:00 in the morning to tell me that? I said, well, Frank, that's terrific, but it's 2:30 in the morning here, I'm very happy for you, but why are you calling me at this ungodly hour. He then realized I guess the other purpose of his phone call was to ask if I would go to Zambia as his DCM. I said, give me 48 hours to think about it. I had a chat with Ed Rowell.

Q: Ed was what?

EGAN: Ed was the DCM. Ed had replaced Herb Okun as DCM. I had a chat with Frank Carlucci and I called Frank Wisner back after two days to say yes.

Q: You said you talked with Frank Carlucci?

EGAN: I mean Dick Bloomfield, sorry.

Q: Dick?

EGAN: Bloomfield, Carlucci's replacement. I talked with the ambassador and I talked with the DCM. I wasn't going to, it wasn't proper to accept such an offer without telling the people you worked for that you were thinking about it, that you had been asked and what did they think. I think they, as I recall, they were very understanding and encouraged me to go ahead. I think I left Lisbon with their blessing and got to Lusaka in June or July of '79 to be DCM. Of course I didn't have the slightest idea of how to be a DCM. I'm not even sure the DCM course existed in those days and it was a direct transfer. I just went from Lisbon to Lusaka and moved into the DCM's office and tried to do that job for three years.

Q: You did that for how long, three years?

EGAN: From '79 to '82.

Q: Zambia in 1979. What was it like?

EGAN: It was an idyllic place to live. It's high. It has a spectacular climate. It's dry. During the rainy season it rains at 11:00 in the morning and 3:00 in the afternoon for 45 minutes, you can set your watch by it. Beautiful blue sky. A luxuriant country with almost unlimited agricultural potential, part of the high veldt of southern Africa, very much like Zimbabwe. For Frank Wisner it was his first ambassadorial posting. Frank had enormous energy, intellect, and imagination, so you can imagine the excitement that he brought to that embassy. Lancaster House was in its final stages.

Q: You should explain what Lancaster House meant.

EGAN: Lancaster House is in London where the agreement between the British and the White Rhodesian government on elections and the transition to a black government was struck.

Q: Under Ian Smith.

EGAN: Under Ian Smith.

Q: We were part of the Lancaster House.

EGAN: I think we had an observer at Lancaster House. I think it was Gib Lanpher actually. When we opened the embassy in what was then Salisbury, Gib was the first DCM.

Q: Yes, I've interviewed Gib, but I can't remember. Anyway.

EGAN: I think he was the first DCM and opened it before Bob Keeley arrived as the first ambassador. We in Lusaka were not overly involved in the Lancaster House negotiations but ZANU [the Zimbabwean African National Union] was based in Lusaka. The Zimbabwean African People's Union [ZAPU], led by Robert Mugabe, was based in Mozambique. We were more substantively involved in the Contact Group work on Angola and Namibia. Lusaka was also the headquarters of the United Nations Institute for Namibia whose director was Hage Geingob. Hage went on to be the first prime minister of independent Namibia. He was a refugee from Namibia and had been on the international staff of the UN in New York for many years where he married an American. But most of our attention was focused on Zambia itself. Kenneth Kaunda was then still the first president of Zambia. It was a one party state. They had major development issues. We were a principal bilateral donor of balance of payment support and PL-480 food assistance. Frank was an enormously dynamic and energetic ambassador. He roamed all over Zambia, had a superb relationship with Kaunda and his cabinet, and had a pretty close relationship with the Zambian intelligence service.

Zambia was also the world's leading producer of copper. A lot of money was invested in the copper industry and in those days I think the price of copper was quite high. The price of copper has since then gone through the floor so what had been one of the principal foreign exchange earners collapsed at the very time when stability in Zambia was important to stability in the region. Kaunda himself was one of the grand old men of independent Africa. His stature was another reason for us to have a good bilateral relationship with him and his government.

Kaunda was best known in those days as the father of Zambian humanism. Humanism was the sort of guiding political philosophy of UNIP, the United National Independence Party which he led. It is the party that was created when Zambia became an independent state in 1964. Kaunda emerged as the leader of a tribally diverse state. One of the problems was that there is no majority tribe in Zambia. Kaunda himself isn't even a native Zambian. He was born in Malawi, the son of a Presbyterian minister. In some respects he was an outsider. There are those who think one of the reasons he was able to maintain political power in Zambia for so long was that he was not overly identified with any single tribal group. His philosophy of humanism is hard to explain. A British historian once told me he thought Kaunda's humanism was an empty suitcase into which you could drop anything you needed. This was as useful a definition of Kaunda's political philosophy as I ever understood.

Q: How did you find dealing with him?

EGAN: Very civilized and very polite. He had several off-putting, they may have been purposefully off-putting, techniques. He lived in what had been the residence of the former British Colonial Governor in considerable comfort. It wasn't luxurious, but it was a very comfortable place. It was nestled in a field of beautiful Jacaranda trees approached by a scratchy gravel driveway. There were nice lawns and birds and flamingos in the backyard and a nine hole golf course. Kaunda used to love to have you to dinner when you had a visiting delegation or for any reason that struck him. He loved to host dinners at a long table in the state dining room that easily sat 25 people. He was a very gracious, comfortable, relaxed host. At the end of the meal, President Kaunda got behind a teacart in the foyer, put a linen napkin over his arm and asked each guest if they would like coffee or tea, with sugar or milk?" The first time this happened to me, my impulse was to say, "Oh, Mr. President, let me do that." It was just he'd always done it. It was one of those things people remembered about him. He enjoyed doing it, perhaps because it put everybody slightly off balance.

I was charged ½ occasionally and if the need arose for me to see the President, his door was always open. I didn't always get what I wanted, but access was never a problem.

Q: I take it that he was the person to see if there was anything to be done is that it or could you go to say the foreign ministry?

EGAN: Well, you dealt with the Foreign Ministry on routine issues. You didn't deal with the Ministry on political issues or on the most important policy issues. If you dropped a difficult issue in the Foreign Minister's lap, he would take it to the President so why not take it there yourself and at least get it presented by yourself in your own words rather than leave it to a foreign minister to act as your interlocutor. In most of my assignments, if the issue was important you worked it with the president's office or the prime minister's office or the monarch's office. You might keep the foreign minister or his senior staff informed, but you were never satisfied to take an issue to the foreign ministry and think that you had accomplished your mission.

Q: I can imagine a topic that would have gotten and obviously the ambassador very much involved right at the beginning would be a crisis in Iran and getting sort of Zambia and the United Nations and all that.

EGAN: I don't remember the hostage crisis in Tehran being an issue when I was in Lusaka, but obviously we all got instructions on it.

Q: I'm sure you got their vote or something like that.

EGAN: Yes, but it made no particular impression on me. I couldn't, I cannot recall a demarche or an instruction or a request for support in the UN. It's very odd because it was certainly the international issue that most preoccupied the United States at that time. I do not remember ever having a conversation with anybody about the hostage situation in Tehran or it being much of an issue within the country team. Now, that's perhaps just my own memory.

Q: But it's indicative.

EGAN: But it just wasn't, in a professional, that's not to suggest that I didn't know what was going on in Tehran, but in a professional context I don't remember it as an issue that we dealt with in any particular way with the Zambian authorities. It seems odd.

Q: Well, then what were the issues that I mean in the first place, how about the running of the embassy?

EGAN: I think that for a first time DCM the management challenge tends to overshadow a lot of the Embassy's more substantive work. That's not to say that you're not an important part of the substantive work, but you've also got other preoccupations. I got to Lusaka as DCM in the summer of 1979. I knew the ambassador very well, but I had never seen an embassy budget. Like most young political officers, I doubt that I had ever supervised more than one quarter of an American secretary or perhaps half of a Foreign Service National secretary. I had no management or supervisory experience or training. There were aspects of the embassy operation, particularly on the administrative side, particularly with respect to budgets and procurement, that I learned by the seat of my pants. Fortunately it was not a particularly large embassy and fortunately I had an indulgent ambassador who didn't particularly want to be preoccupied with the dollars of keeping the lights on in that mission himself. That occupied a lot of my time.

We had a fairly large AID presence in Zambia: an American staff of perhaps 10. Their offices were not in the embassy. There were several AID directors who thought they were independent, autonomous Washington representatives and had difficulty understanding that they weren't. There were some contentious housing board decisions, health issues, food supply issues, all of the care and feeding of an embassy staff at a hardship post. We and most other embassies were in an area of 25 or 30 acres set aside by the host government. We had the British high commission on one side and the German embassy on the other with a door through the walls to each of those compounds. There were periodically some rather large demonstrations in Lusaka related mostly to what was going on in Rhodesia. A couple of the British high commissioners were the focus of public protests. There was more than one occasion in which either the high commissioner himself or his head of the chancery, who would have been my counterpart, would call to ask if they could bring the Daimler over and park it on our lot so that the crowds wouldn't see it and throw stones at it. Those missions actually worked very closely together. I made some good friends during that posting and people that stayed friends for a long time. It was also the assignment in which I had the worst experience of a badly managed station.

Q: I was wondering, you know, this might be a good place to stop.

EGAN: I've got a board meeting in 10 minutes.

Q: Yes. We'll stop here where, and I'll put here where we are or you might put what you want to talk about.

EGAN: When we resume this I want to pick up on the CIA case officer problem in 1981.

Q: Yes and if there are any other issues, you're talking about the management.

EGAN: We can come back to it.

Q: Come back to the management and maybe some of the personalities there and all that. Good.

EGAN: Be glad to.

Q: Today is the 27th of April, 2004. Wes, first, what was the case officer situation?

EGAN: We had a very active station in Lusaka and there were a couple of superb officers on the staff, most of them fairly young case officers. Southern Africa was a good place to be a case officer in those days. It was a good place to work for bright, ambitious, and aggressive case officers and we had several of them. Most of them were superb. One of them was not.

Q: You might explain for somebody reading this what you mean by case officer.

EGAN: Well, a case officer is a CIA officer who recruits and handles agents in the field. First and foremost case officers recruit agents who can be of use to us either with respect to what they know or what they can do. As I said, Southern Africa was a very active field for that sort of work in those days. In any case, the issue here was a station chief who had probably passed his prime and was not supervising some of these young case officers as closely as he should. This case involved the recruitment of an agent who was then provided with equipment for clandestine collection and communication. The agent was not particularly skilled or was not particularly well run by the case officer. The Zambian intelligence service stumbled across the agent's work. I think it broke open accidentally as was so often the case, while the ambassador was away. My telephone rang about 3:00 in the morning and it was Peter Kasanda, the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He summoned me to his office at 3:00 AM and laid out the details of what they had found and the case officer's identity. Kasanda demanded that that officer leave the country immediately and threatened that depending on how we responded to this incident there were others on the embassy staff who might also be expelled. The case officer involved was out of the country within 12 hours. The station chief was recalled to Washington and did not return. The case officer's wife refused to leave Zambia. For reasons that I never understood, the Agency was very reluctant to force her to pack up and collect the kids and take them out of school and leave. She remained in Lusaka another several months. The Zambians were so angry that they hinted they might expel the Ambassador, me, and two other embassy officers. In the end they declared the public affairs officer, Mike O'Brien, persona non grata. One of the things that surprised me in the aftermath of this case was that we made a very strong recommendation to the Agency that the officer concerned was not competent to be reassigned in the field. Nevertheless, within a few years he was back in the field in a fairly sensitive position. The station chief who had been recalled was given a training assignment and retired from the service some years later. We went through a very rocky period in the bilateral relationship. We had some good help from Washington in smoothing it out, but it was tough.

Q: Can you explain what was sort of precarious about this? I mean people doing things all the time. Why were the Zambians responding in this way?

EGAN: Because the action involved state house, the president's official residence and his working offices. It was pretty high level. It was not only badly done, but it was not a good idea to begin with. It was ill-conceived. We didn't need it and we didn't get anything useful out of it. All we got was a lot of trouble.

Q: Yes, well, this so often is the case in this type of thing.

EGAN: One of the things that it taught me early on is I didn't like sitting in a foreign ministry being briefed on an aspect of a clandestine activity that I didn't know anything about. I spent a lot of time overseas after that and made it my business to be sure that I was well informed on those aspects of our intelligence activities overseas. I didn't want to be surprised again. I wanted the opportunity to consider and if necessary object to intelligence activities I considered high risk and low return. It was an important object lesson for me.

I learned a couple of other important lessons in Zambia. I had absolutely no experience with budgeting and supply of an embassy much less one in a country where the borders were closed and you couldn't get things in overland and by normal routes. I learned a lot on the job about the budget cycle and how to try to manipulate Washington to get funds we thought we needed. I was also exposed for the first time to some of the tensions that are not uncommon between AID directors and ambassadors.

We had a very talented and moderately senior AID director who was very sensitive to what he perceived to be his entitlements with respect to housing, vehicles, office space, etc. I learned a lot by watching how a strong and professional ambassador who didn't broke any silliness, dealt with a difficult AID director and the difficult director's stormy relationship with the economic counselor. Watching over and staying informed about and when necessary waving some red flags about intelligence activities in country, dealing with disputes between AID and colleagues on the State side, and of course supervising the mechanics of running an embassy with an American staff of about 60 in a country in the midst of a regional conflict with horrific balance of payments problems, no overland importation or travel because of the war in Rhodesia were useful lessons for me at an early stage of my career.

Q: Did you get any feel for the tribal situation in Southern Africa? You know, I mean, I don't know if Zambia would be the place to pick this up where there was sort of unitribal or was tribalism an issue?

EGAN: Tribalism was such a profound issue. I mean it was such, it was such a broad issue in Zambia that in an interesting way it almost became irrelevant because there were probably 25 or 30 tribal identities in Zambia. None of them were dominant. There was nothing similar to what you had in Rhodesia between Shona and Matabele for example. There was nothing even close to what you had in South Africa with the Zulu, the Xhosa, and others, where you had either the dramatic dominance of a single tribal group or several major tribal groups, ethnic groups that were rivals for influence, patronage, land title, etc. Zambia was a much more fragmented tribal environment. It was a very different ethnic environment than South Africa, or Zimbabwe Rhodesia or even Angola. In a way, tribal diversity made tribal differences less important.

Kaunda's eventual successor, Freddie Chiluba, we met when he was still a young man. He was a leader of the mineworkers union up in the copper belt. Embassy political officers spent a lot of time in the copper belt because it was the most industrialized part of the country. The price of copper, the condition of the mines, the efficiency of the mines, the product of the mines and the trade union issues were all major political issues when we were there. Chiluba was one of our early international visitor program grantees. Kaunda was not particularly vulnerable in those days. He became more vulnerable politically as he got older and as Zambia's problems increased with HIV/AIDs, unemployment, poverty, famine, disaster in the agricultural sector, etc.

Q: You mentioned the mines. I think it was around this time or even a little before that the big mines in Katanga were going downhill rapidly, both the market and also the upkeep of the mines. They weren't being kept up. Was it the same problem?

EGAN: The Zambian mines were run essentially by a British, South African, Zambian consortium and they had been extremely productive for many years. The efficiency of the mines deteriorated for lack of modern improvements, but I think what really killed them, well, it didn't kill them, but what caused such disruption at the time was simply that the world price for the commodity, you could hardly sustain production. It was those economic factors with respect to the world market I think more unbalanced than any aspect of the way in which that consortium was managed that had become such a problem by the early '80s

Q: Did the British and South African interests, were they looking to get out?

EGAN: By 1981 1982 they were trying to get out. In fact they were at one point trying to interest several American companies in taking over a principle share of that industry. The string kind of ran out on it, but the mines had been not unlike situations in South Africa for many years, being one of the real engines of Zambia's economic health. The tragedy was that Zambia is a beautiful part of the high plateau of the interior of Southern Africa. It is a spectacular climate. It's like living in Southern California. You can stick a broom handle in the ground and it will grow. You can grow anything. If one needed any proof of that, many of the farmers who had been displaced from Zimbabwe have moved themselves and their families across the Zambezi River into Zambia where they have been welcomed by the government and have started their farming life over again; often with the same set of crops and the same mix of lifestyle as they began with in Zimbabwe generations ago. The Zambian government today, I wouldn't say they were encouraging those farmers to make the move, but they are certainly welcoming them and making it easy and attractive for them to buy land and raise the funds to make the initial investments to get seed in the ground and hopefully feed Zambia to an extent that Zambia has not been able to feed itself for years. The agricultural potential of Zambia, like Zimbabwe, is just phenomenal. There's no reason why either of those countries should be importers of any agricultural products.

Q: Then you left there in '80?

EGAN: I left Zambia in 1982. I had a call from Lannon Walker, who was the senior deputy assistant secretary in AF, saying the bureau wanted to send my name forward as the bureau's candidate to be the next ambassador to Guinea-Bissau. Well, I was, this was what 1982? I'd been in the Service 11 years. I was I think an FSO-1 in the old system. I was surprised and delighted by that phone call. I remember only the briefest hesitation when I said to myself, but not to Lannon Walker or to Frank Wisner, where is Guinea-Bissau? Why would anybody want to go there? Of course sometimes when you are told that you're being considered at a job at that level, it is very flattering, and it can go to your head very easily. Sometimes there's also a second thought that follows that very quickly, assuming that you're not being asked to be the ambassador to the Court of St. James, or Paris or Delhi, or Ottawa or someplace like that. You may think to yourself that if you are good enough for them to ask you to serve in a tiny, far away, barely known place in old Portuguese West Africa, maybe you could angle for something a little bigger. But I quickly figured out that the first time you're asked whether you would be available to serve as an ambassador, it doesn't matter where it is. The first time is always really special and it doesn't matter how big or how small it is, how important or unimportant it is, how far away or how close it is, it is one of those great professional thrills. Some people get a little pickier later in their career, but I think the first time, anybody with any commons sense at all says, "I'm your guy, send me." That's what I said.

Q: I always wanted to go to.

EGAN: I've always wanted to go. I came back to the States. I had a very brief overlap with my successor in Lusaka. I think Frank also came back to Washington in 1982. He was replaced by Nick Platt. Nick had his own DCM coming and so I served as Nick Platt's DCM for three or four weeks and tried to help him settle in before his chosen DCM arrived. Nick asked me if I would stay on for a week with the new DCM which I agreed to do, but it was a mistake. I don't think the overlap was helpful. For the same reason no embassy needs two ambassadors at post at the same time, no embassy needs two DCMs at post at the same time. So, I moved on as quickly as I could.

I'm not sure you can still do this these days, but I didn't want to come back to Washington and walk around the halls on overcompliment and I didn't want to be assigned to a make-work job just to pass the time while the nomination process went ahead. It didn't take as long in those days for an ambassador to be selected, nominated, heard, sworn in, and arrive at post. I think it now takes over a year. In my case it took about six months. So, I just said to Washington, well, I'm going to be at my house in Chapel Hill, North Carolina and when the process is far enough advanced that I can begin consultations and get ready for hearings, call me and I'll come up to Washington. I put myself on administrative leave for about six months. I moved back to Chapel Hill, put my youngest child in local junior high school and had a rather relaxed life for about four months. Finally, President Reagan called the house and asked me to go to Bissau. I said yes and returned to Washington several weeks later. He liked to call and have a photograph with all new ambassadors.

Jesse Helms was the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and Nancy Kassebaum was the chairman of the Africa Subcommittee. When my hearing was scheduled, my parents and my brothers all came to Washington. The ambassador of Guinea-Bissau to the United States was also there. I was already a Portuguese speaker, so I didn't have to do any language training for Guinea-Bissau, but I prepared like crazy for the hearing. I don't think there was much I didn't know about Guinea-Bissau. Senator Helms started the hearing by saying, "Mr. Egan, I understand that you went to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill." Senator Helms was not a friend of the university in those days. He thought it was far too liberal. I had thought about how I would respond to such a question and said, "Yes, Senator that's correct. I did go to the University at Chapel Hill." Having a little fun and with some edge to his voice he then said, "I wonder if you can explain to me and to the Committee how it is that the North Carolina Tar Heels have dropped from number one to number 11 in the NCAA rankings?" You can imagine the odd expression that passed over the face of the Guinea-Bissau ambassador. He was having trouble following the discussion in English, but to have this first question be about a basketball team was confusing. I said, "Senator, I can't explain why they've dropped from number one to number 11, but I will give you my personal guarantee that by the time of the NCAA finals, they'll be in the top eight." Helms sort of sat back and said, "Well, that's fine with me, no further questions." He then turned the hearing over to Nancy Kassebaum who turned to him and said, "Well, Senator, I think we can take Mr. Egan's word on that because after all, the North Carolina Tar Heels have a fellow Kansan" meaning Dean Smith "at the helm." At that there was a big round of laughter in the hearing room. Then the police came in and said there was a bomb threat. The hearing room was cleared. We all went and stood out in the hall for 15 or 20 minutes. The dogs came in sniffed around all the chairs. Everybody was standing around and Senator Helms and Nancy Kassebaum came up to me, and my family and she said, "Mr. Egan, the Chairman and I have talked about this and thank you very much for coming up today and I don't think we're going to have any further questions for you. You may go." That was the end of my first confirmation hearing. Afterwards the poor man who was the Guinea-Bissau ambassador to the United States came up to me and in Portuguese so that the others didn't quite understand said, "What was that all about? What am I supposed to tell my foreign minister?" I was confirmed by the Senate a few days later and got to Guinea-Bissau in early spring of 1983.

Q: You were there from when to when?

EGAN: I was there from 1983 to 1985.

Q: First, what about living conditions there?

EGAN: Without question they were the most difficult living conditions we ever faced in the Foreign Service. Guinea-Bissau was very small and extremely poor. It's where the resistance to Portuguese colonialism in Africa began in 1954. I was only the third American ambassador in Bissau. Melissa Wells had been first followed by Pete De Vos. They had been accredited to Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde, but resident in Bissau. The same political party, the PAIGC, was the government in both countries. When I was sent in 1983 the decision was made that we would send separate ambassadors to Guinea-Bissau and Praia in Cape Verde. I had a colleague who went through the confirmation process almost exactly at the same time as I did who was on his way to Cape Verde.

The assignment presented us with the most physically demanding and difficult living conditions my family and I have ever faced. My son was in boarding school in the States, but my daughter was only an 8th grader, so she spent her first year with us. There were no schools and you could not buy an aspirin on the local market. Our consumable allowance was 12,000 pounds. We even took several thousand pounds of rice to Guinea-Bissau, a country that had been a rice producer. The residence was two little attached houses next to the crumbling national football stadium in the center of town. Out the backdoor you had about eight feet before there was a wall that surrounded you on the back and on both sides. We had a wonderful household staff and a terrific embassy staff. We had two or three hours of diesel generated electrical power everyday. For most of our time there was nothing coming through the national grid and fuel had to be imported from Senegal by truck.

The embassy itself was a storefront. It had been a small shop in the main street of town that the United States government had bought. It was like a small jewelry shop, perhaps 1000 square feet. It had huge plate glass windows that looked out on the street. They were subsequently replaced with steel shutters that made the whole place kind of dark and brooding and forbidding. There was a large warehouse in the back and three floors of staff apartments above. We had to warehouse all of our equipment and supplies and fuel oil. I found 200 50-gallon drums of gasoline in the warehouse, like a bomb. It scared me to death when I first saw it. We later moved the fuel to another location where they presented a little bit less of a threat. The diplomat community was very small. I think there were 13 resident ambassadors. The ambassador from Senegal lived in Dakar, He wouldn't live in Bissau because it was so difficult. There were ambassadors from Portugal, Brazil, France, and China. All the others were from the East Bloc and the PLO.

We had a very tough time, but we also had a very good time. One 4th of July, the Embassy was down to five liters of gasoline. We were building a new residence compound outside of the city on the way to the airport. As soon as construction began, we started to use the property for volleyball games and that kind of stuff on the weekends. We were going to have our 4th of July party there using food people would contribute. But we also had a pouch coming in on the plane the day before the 4th of July. We didn't have enough fuel to use the truck to go to the airport to get the pouches and to use the truck to go around town to collect all of the American and local staff for the 4th of July, we couldn't do both. We had an embassy-wide meeting to decide which was more important, the pouch or the 4th of July. The unanimous decision was to have the 4th of July party and we just let the pouches sit at the airport. The spirit of community was absolutely terrific. I would guess, I never served in Paris or London, but I would guess that our embassy morale and community spirit might have been a lot better than at many larger and more important posts.

Q: Some of the grand posts basically doesn't exist.

EGAN: There's no community.

Q: What were we doing there?

EGAN: We were trying to turn what had been a Marxist-dominated, post-colonial government a little more toward the West and toward support for our positions on various West African regional issues, positions that we favored in the UN and in other international organizations, and we were trying to develop a more normal bilateral relationship with a government that had been heavily influenced by its Soviet, Chinese, and East German patrons since Guinea-Bissau's independence from Portugal in 1974. We had a small bilateral assistance program to help that process. I was surprised during my consultations to learn that our assistance had traditionally been supplied as PL-480 Title II emergency food assistance. It was almost all in rice. Well, I hadn't been in country too long before as a result of a lot of questioning and a lot of travel I realized that Guinea-Bissau was in fact producing quite a good rice crop every year, but the farmers who produced more than their needs had no choice but to sell their surplus to the government for which they would be paid in a worthless currency to use in empty shops. So, the farmers did what any enterprising farmer would do. They smuggled their surplus into the Casamance in southern Senegal, and sold it for CFA, the French franc-supported currency of Francophone West Africa from which of course Guinea-Bissau was excluded. The farmers would then use their CFA in Senegal to buy fertilizer, plastic buckets, shoes, whatever they happened to need and then smuggle those goods back across the border to Guinea-Bissau. I told the president of Guinea-Bissau, Nino Vieira, that I was not going to request any more Title II emergency food assistance. I felt strongly that I was not going to use scarce Title II emergency food assistance for a country that was already producing a surplus. The president was furious. Washington wasn't too happy either. We didn't provide it for a year and a half and slowly the process by which agricultural goods were commercialized in Guinea-Bissau changed and they slowly became less dependent on external food assistance.

There were only three ambassadors resident in Guinea-Bissau who spoke Portuguese: the Brazilian, the Portuguese and myself. The Cuban and Russian ambassadors and the PLO spoke only Spanish. We were the only three who spoke Portuguese and it made a difference.

Q: Oh, I'm sure it did.

EGAN: It helped a lot in my relationship with President Vieira. My Russian colleague had a helicopter in Guinea-Bissau that he used to offer to President Vieira for in country travel. I went out with the Russian ambassador and President Vieira several times in this helicopter to try to find the President's old headquarters camp deep in the bush. The Russians could never find it. The president used to get very frustrated. One day I had the C-12 and defense attaché½ visiting from Monrovia and I invited the President to come and try to find this camp with us. We sat down and we looked at a map. He pointed directly to it on the map. The air attaché½ used his new global positioning system, keyed in the coordinates, and we flew right to it. It made quite an impression on President Vieira. It was a difficult assignment in that if you wanted to get anything done, you really had no choice but to deal with him, his minister of defense or his minister of foreign affairs. It was very direct and very personal. There was no structure with which you could interact. We had some success on votes in the UN. We had some success with respect to economic reform. We got the first U.S. navy ship into Bissau ever on a port visit. Bissau is quite far up the river from the ocean. The channel is very difficult to find and the navy captains used to have to pick up a harbor pilot from a dugout canoe at the mouth of the river. He would guide them about 40 miles upriver to the city. Primitive conditions, but I think you always look back on your first assignment fondly. It's a very sort of special bond of friendship that was formed. I wouldn't want to go back to Guinea-Bissau and it was very hard on the family. It was very hard on my wife and on my daughter. It's an experience we will never forget and I think we actually got some good work done.

Q: Were there any particular developments while you were there? You were there two years?

EGAN: I was there from 1983 to 1985. It felt very isolated. The biggest regional issue involved the profound suspicion between the governments of Guinea-Bissau and Senegalese based on the anxiety that Guinea-Bissau has supported a separatist resistance movement in southern Senegal. There were also suspicions in Guinea-Bissau that the Senegalese had designs on their territory.

I had no DCM or political officer. Our staff was one American secretary, a first tour vice-consul, an admin officer, two communicators, half a dozen AID staff, no station, and no military attaché½. It was a minimal staff.

Q: Well, then when you left there in '85, whither?

EGAN: This was before the days of e-mails and easy telephone contacts, fax messages and that sort of thing. One day I got a telegram from the Assistant Secretary of African affairs who said, I think I got this cable on a Monday, it said, the Deputy Secretary of State wanted to see me on Wednesday at 11:00. Please advise your travel plans. That's all it said. Well, you know, I'm sitting out there in Guinea-Bissau wondering why the Deputy Secretary of State wanted to see me in 48 hours. What have I done? What's happened that I don't know about? I sent a very quick message back to the bureau to say I couldn't get from Bissau to Washington in 48 hours, I could be there by such and such a date, and could they tell me what it was all about? The bureau didn't know. I subsequently got a message from Ned Walker who was the Deputy Secretary's chief of staff who told me that my name had been suggested to the Deputy Secretary as his possible replacement as his chief of staff. So, it was about a job.

I went back to Washington and interviewed with the Deputy Secretary, Ken Dam. This was in early spring of 1985. He said he liked the idea of having a chief of staff who had ambassadorial rank. He thought it would be helpful both with the White House and with the Congress. We talked about what he was looking for in particular and I told him I was interested, but that I wanted to talk to my family about it and I'd have to think about it. Then just before I left, I said, does the fact that you're interviewing for a new chief of staff suggest that you're going to be in this job for a while? He said, oh, yes, at least another two and a half years. This was the spring of '85. I went back to post. My wife and I talked about it. We decided it would be a good thing to do and so I accepted. I was paneled for the job within a couple of days and I was back in Washington within about six weeks.

Ken Dam left within about three months to become a vice president for IBM and John Whitehead of Goldman Sachs was appointed his successor. John asked me to stay on and so I helped sort of to reintroduce him to public service. He had not done any public service since his time in the Navy in 1942. In fact the circumstances under which he was appointed were curious. Charlie Hill, executive secretary of the Department, called me and said Secretary Shultz is thinking about a replacement for Ken Dam and Walter Wriston had suggested that Shultz consider John Whitehead. Charlie told me to call Whitehead and ask him if he could come to Washington for breakfast with the Secretary. I didn't know John Whitehead, but I called him, told him who I was and said that I'd been asked to invite him to breakfast with Secretary Shultz. Whitehead asked what it was all about and I told him it was about a job. Whitehead came to Washington and Secretary Shultz, Whitehead, Charlie Hill and I had breakfast upstairs in the Secretary's dining room. Shultz asked Whitehead to be his Deputy Secretary of State. Whitehead and Shultz didn't know each other very well. Shultz knew him only by reputation. As I recall John Whitehead said something like, "I wouldn't have been surprised if you asked me to come down to talk about some global debt issue or Mexican default or something over at Treasury, but Deputy Secretary of State? I really don't have any experience in foreign affairs. I'm an investment banker." Secretary Shultz then decided to take a slightly confused Whitehead over to the White House to meet President Reagan. As they walked into the Oval Office the President stuck his hand out as if John had already agreed to take this job and congratulated him and thanked him for being willing to come down to Washington and be the Deputy Secretary of State. That's how it happened. When Whitehead told the President he wasn't sure he had enough experience for the job, the President smiled and said, "John, don't worry, neither did I."

Whitehead had a private art collection in New York, and wanted to bring some of those pieces to Washington to have in his office. The deputy secretary's office was furnished from the Department's collection of Americana and Whitehead didn't want to disrupt that. But he had three or four pieces that he really wanted to have in the office. We talked about what he should do about it and I said he should meet with Clem Conger, the Department curator, and tell him what he wanted to bring down and I'm sure he would be open to that. So, that meeting took place. Clem Conger said to John Whitehead, "What is it you want to bring down?" Whitehead said, "Well, I've got a couple of Degas', a Monet, a Manet and a Pissarro." Clem Conger looked at John Whitehead and he said, "Degas, Monet, Manet, Pissarro, well, okay, okay, but only if they're nice pieces."

One of the most difficult adjustments I think he had to make was to adjust to having a staff. As an investment banker, he had never really had a staff, just a very senior executive secretary. When he needed a piece of information at Goldman Sachs, he would just go to whoever he needed to go to to get it. When somebody in that system had something to tell him, they just came up and told him. To suddenly have several secretaries, a chief of staff and an executive assistant, two or three special assistants, a special advisor, a staff of seven or eight 7th floor types, he really was not sure at the outset what he was supposed to do with all of us.

His introduction to the Department focused on the substantive issues of policy that were important to the administration and the administration's position on those issues and how they were being pushed along; the structure and organization of the Department and how it related to the rest of the foreign affairs community; and how you dealt with DOD, the CIA, AID and all the rest. He learned very quickly and very well and I think was probably one of the most active and strongest deputy secretaries of State we've had in a long time. I think he loved the experience and was of very special service to that administration. So I did Seventh Floor staff work for the next two years, until 1987.

In October, Dick Viets, a career Foreign Service Officer, was nominated to be ambassador to Portugal. Senator Helms was still the chairman of the Senate foreign relations committee. There had been an incident overseas involving a wealthy political appointee who didn't feel that her representation budget was sufficient. So she did some fundraising to supplement those funds. There were some accusations in the press that this ambassador had done something inappropriate by commingling public and private funds in her representational activities at post. But several members of Congress, including Senator Helms, thought this was actually a "Democratic State Department" effort to smear the reputation of a loyal political appointee. There was an investigation of the allegations by the Inspector General and while he found some irregularities, there was nothing criminal, nothing actionable, nothing that warranted disciplinary action. Senator Helms was so convinced that the President's appointee had been singled out, that he let it be known that the next time a career nominee came before his committee he was going to grill this nominee until he found something wrong. He was going to look into every aspect of that nominee's personal and professional life. Well, the next career nominee whose papers were sent to the committee was Dick Viets, and he ran into a buzz saw. His nomination languished. Just as this trouble began Roz Ridgeway who was then the Assistant Secretary for European Affairs and Dick Viets asked me if I would go back to Lisbon as chargé d'affaires anticipating that this nomination process was going to take an unusually long time. The previous ambassador, Frank Shakespeare, had already left, so they needed to get someone out there. Would I do that while this nomination was in progress and then stay on as Ambassador Viets' DCM? I had a special fondness for Portugal and I was ready to go back overseas and so I said yes.

Q: Before we move to Portugal, let's talk about the staff more. Can you think of, you're saying that John Whitehead was extremely busy, active. What does a deputy secretary do when the Secretary is kind of around?

EGAN: It's one of those positions that I think depends almost entirely on the relationship between the Secretary and the Deputy and between the Deputy and the rest of the Department. There is very little that is institutionally defined in that job and every Deputy Secretary of State that I know has done the job differently. Strobe Talbott did it differently than Warren Christopher who did it differently than John Whitehead who did it differently than Ken Dam and Bob Ingersoll and all those people. It's one of those positions in the Department that can be perfectly tailored to the Secretary's needs and desires. So, Whitehead's function as Deputy Secretary of State was unique to his relationship with George Shultz.

I think Whitehead had closer relationships with the assistant secretaries than others I can remember. If an assistant secretary had an issue and wanted the deputy secretary's help in moving that issue forward or if the assistant secretary had a problem, John would sit with that individual and almost inevitably in the end after talking about whatever the issue happened to be, would say, okay, it's your call, it's your decision and whatever you decide, I will back you up. There were occasions when some of the assistant secretaries were a little surprised at that. They wanted to move the burden of responsibility up to the deputy secretary level, but he wouldn't let them do that. He said, this is your baby and this is your call and I will be in your corner, but I'm not going to do this work for you. He was the most engaged deputy I have seen on the process of ambassadorial nominations. He chaired what was called the D committee which had always played a big role in the selection of career nominees. John expanded that to include Schedule C political appointees and worked with the White House office of presidential personnel directly including some of the horse-trading that inevitably takes place. In another area he was concerned that we were missing opportunities in Eastern Europe, that the politics of the region had reached a point where we needed to engage more directly and more aggressively with East European governments to push them further and faster to promote domestic economic and political reform, greater respect for human rights, etc. The Department of State reacted very negatively to that at first. They didn't want the deputy secretary involved and they thought he was wrong. They thought he was naïf½ve. They thought he would be butting his head up against a brick wall and in the process he would make the management of those relationships and the management of the relationship with the Soviets more difficult. He pressed on. Marc Grossman who replaced me and Bill Burns were his principle staff supporters in that effort. I was in Lisbon by then, but I know that with the Secretary's support, John traveled extensively in Eastern Europe in the last year and a half of his time as deputy and made an important contribution to the evolution of those relationships. I think he deserves enormous credit for having done that. I think in retrospect some people might have wondered whether he was selected for that job by Secretary Shultz because investment bankers have a reputation as being fairly good at calculating risks and the potential returns on investment.

Q: Well, was there a feeling anywhere that you were picking up? You weren't a Soviet specialist, but this is the period where Gorbachev was beginning to come, I mean something was changing or was this looked upon as being a kind of a trap? What were you thinking?

EGAN: No, I think the perception was that things were loosening, but one had to be very careful not to press too hard or too fast because whatever impetus or opportunity for change and reform existed might be compromised if we did. I think John's feeling was that we, the institution of the Department of State, if not the United States government as a whole, had gotten so used to managing these relationships in the context of the status quo that there were opportunities that we were not recognizing and that he thought we needed to find and exploit. He had the Secretary's nod to do that and he did, and he dragged most of the rest of the system with him.

Q: It's certainly part of the folklore of the government during the Reagan period that you had these two bosom buddies, George Shultz and Casper Weinberger, both grown up in the California system, both being with Bechtel and all and they hated each other's guts. They could hardly stand each other. Now, did John Whitehead and whoever was the deputy over there try to, I mean did you have the feeling that they were.

EGAN: John Whitehead had a very good relationship with Cap Weinberger.

Q: I was wondering who was the Pentagon counterpart?

EGAN: I can't remember. But John Whitehead had a very good and direct relationship with Weinberger.

Q: Was he the guy who was going to keep this thing from getting septic and being really nasty?

EGAN: John had a good relationship with Weinberger. John was half owner of the New Jersey Devils hockey team and he was also dating Nancy Dickerson at the time. Whenever the Devils came to Washington to play the Caps, if one of the owners of the visiting team was there they would be given one of the skyboxes for the night. I can remember several occasions in which John Whitehead would invite us to join him and Nancy Dickerson and Cap Weinberger and his wife and sometimes another couple or two, but often just that small group, in that sky box to watch the game and sometimes to have dinner, but always to watch the game. It was clear from the way, to me anyway, the way those two men dealt with each other that perhaps because the relationship with Shultz was a bit sour, things nevertheless needed to get done between those two departments and the Weinberger-Whitehead channel was one that carried a lot of that baggage. John Whitehead also had Jim Timbie on his staff. Jim was a senior career civil servant and one of the leading arms control experts in the Department. That part of Whitehead's work involved of course extensive contacts with DOD and the rest of the intelligence community, much of that managed and coordinated by Jim. So, you had not only a good open channel working relationship between Weinberger and Whitehead, but also a substantive channel between Jim and his colleagues in Defense and on the NSC staff. I think Whitehead played a key role in keeping the Shultz-Weinberger relationship balanced. I think sometimes he was a bit of a safety valve for it and I think sometimes there were discussions that Cap Weinberger felt he could have with John Whitehead that he didn't particularly want to have with George Shultz. To the best of my knowledge John Whitehead never got crosswise with either of them.

Q: With the staff around, I mean I've watched this at the lowest level and at the upper levels and all that, they're saying oh God, we've got to get this settled and Shultz and Weinberger aren't going to, its not going to work. Did you ever kind of almost deliberately show Whitehead out over to take care of it or something?

EGAN: I think the importance of his role in those situations was that he came into play in one way or another before it ever got to that. It wasn't as if he was pulling somebody's chestnut out of the fire. He was helping the system address and resolve those issues before it ever go to that stage. He's on the one hand a very low-key, relaxed, easy, casual person to talk to. On the other hand, he's very strong willed and gutsy and he'll take a position on an issue or he'll make a commitment to do something or he'll undertake something. Sometimes you might kind of stand back and say, oh, he's taking a risk there. That's what he did and he seemed to relish in it and he seemed to do it well, so I think he really helped that process.

Q: Did you ever get the impression during this time you were there from when to when again?

EGAN: I was there from early '85 until '87 when I went back overseas.

Q: This is when Reagan and Gorbachev were getting to know each other weren't they?

EGAN: Slowly.

Q: Did you ever get the impression that there was a fight going on through the soul of Ronald Reagan between the NSC, the White House staff, the Pentagon, State Department and all this? Were you part of feeling this, you know, getting the President to do the right thing and not do the wrong thing or something like that. I think of Richard Pearl being one of them.

EGAN: I think everybody in public service at that level whether you're on the foreign policy side or the domestic policy side, anybody in those positions thinks that they are part of a struggle for either the President's soul or his mind or both whichever they think is the most important asset.

Q: Whatever operates.

EGAN: Whatever works, yes. It might have seemed a little more pronounced because of the personality of the President and perhaps equally because of the personality of some of his senior cabinet members who were very strong characters. Cap Weinberger being one of them and George Shultz being another. I don't think there was anything unusual about that. There were periods in which we focused on housekeeping in the Department, or a particular cluster of substantive issues that Whitehead had a hand, in when it seemed like all we did was struggle at the interagency level with who's going to be in which meeting and who's got drafting rights on this memo and how's it going to come out and who's going to be with the President on this and how do you sandbag so and so, but that's life at that level of this system. John Whitehead was a very easy man to work for in that environment. I wouldn't say he has no ego, but I never saw it get in the way. I wouldn't be able to say that about every deputy secretary of state I've seen. He was a very decent man who earned what for him was a minuscule public servant salary for three years and did the public administration of this government a lot of good.

Q: Did you get involved on the administrative side with the development of what became the National Foreign Affairs Training Center?

EGAN: No because most of that was after I left. My most intense involvement on management and administrative issues was with Whitehead and Ron Spiers who was the Undersecretary for Management and with George Vest who was the Director General on the process of ambassadorial selection. I was the sort of the executive secretary for the D committee that made those recommendations that went forward to the White House and I would help get everybody ready for those meetings. I also helped deal with the results of those meetings. On occasion, I had the unfortunate task of calling people to tell them they didn't get the nod this time and some of those conversations were quite painful, but no I was not involved in any particular way with NFATC [National Foreign Affairs Training Center].

Q: Well, then how long were you in Portugal?

EGAN: I got back to Portugal in July of 1987. I was there until the summer of 1990. I was chargé d'affaires for almost a year. Ambassador Viets never made it to post and he eventually withdrew his own nomination and not long after that resigned from the Foreign Service. When Ambassador Viets' nomination died, the Department called me and asked me how I would feel if they put my name forward as the nominee for Portugal. The person that called me was Charlie Thomas. I'd known Charlie for many years. I told him I thought it would be a mistake. The Portuguese didn't understand why so much time had passed and they, a founding member of NATO, and a member of the EC didn't have an American ambassador. Washington kept telling me to explain to them the nature of our process and what the problem was, but they knew our process perfectly well and they knew the nature of the problem with Viets' nomination, but that didn't solve their problem. They were offended and angry. I said they had dealt with me very graciously and easily during my long period as chargé d'affaires but that if my name were put forward, we would be asking them to accept a number two, a second choice. When Charlie Thomas called me, I don't even know whether he had any real authority to ask me that question, but he did. In the end, Ed Rowell was nominated and quickly confirmed which was the best decision.

Q: Bolivia.

EGAN: Ed was the ambassador in La Paz, Bolivia and of course he had been the DCM in Lisbon in the '70s. Ed zipped through the nomination process and was at post probably within six months. I stayed on for perhaps another year and then got a call from Frank Wisner in Cairo asking me to be his DCM there.

Q: What was the situation in Lisbon when you arrived?

EGAN: Well, it was a hell of a change from the first time around because all the things that we had been so worried about in the 1970s, whether Portugal, can you trust a socialist Mario Soares, what's the real communist party influence going to be, how steady a NATO ally will they remain after the revolution, will we be able to sustain our base rights agreements in the Azores, what kind of an EC member are they going to be, what role are they going to play with respect to talks between the MPLA and UNITA in Angola? Those questions had for the most part all been resolved in the intervening 10 years. Soares was president and loved it. The relationship was a much calmer and more routine one than it had been right after the revolution. There were a couple of issues that dominated our work. For a period of time after the revolution, Portugal was I think the only European country that was a recipient of bilateral U.S. assistance and it was a couple of hundred million a year. It was substantial and part of it was in development assistance and part of it was in military assistance and much of the military assistance was in equipment, hardware, excess MAP, training, all of course related to our presence in the Azores. Lajes Field was an important refueling station, it was like having an aircraft carrier in the middle of the Atlantic, and it was the base for much of our antisubmarine warfare work in the Atlantic.

Q: In Iceland sort of.

EGAN: That's right. We had a substantial Air Force, Army and Navy presence. I used to joke; I still joke about the role of those three services at Lajes Field in the Azores. Somebody would say, what are all these people out there doing because there were like 2,000 Americans on that base. The answer was always, well, the Army drives the seagoing tugs, the Navy flies the P3 Orion ASW aircraft, and the Air Force mows the lawn. It was an important installation for us and our base rights agreement for Lajes was coming up for renewal. The Portuguese wanted some F-5Es which we were having trouble finding the money to supply. Simultaneously, our economic development assistance, much of which had been devoted to housing issues immediately after the revolution because of the enormous return of Portuguese citizens from the five African colonies, could not be kept at such high levels. We don't pay rent for bases, but of course, there was inevitably a consideration provided and we were trying to find a way to sustain the impact of what had been some pretty sizable bilateral non-military assistance levels and to stay engaged with the Portuguese on certain development issues and to avoid the appearance of just suddenly terminating that economic assistance while at the same time needing to renegotiate the agreement on Lajes. So, we came up with the idea of creating a foundation, the Luso-American Development Foundation to be endowed by either the last year's worth of bilateral economic assistance or a portion of the last couple of years' worth of non-military assistance to create an endowment of tens of millions of dollars. The foundation would have first an American director and a Portuguese deputy and a professional staff and it would be a mechanism through which Portugal and the United States could continue to cooperate, not just on bilateral development issues, but also cultural and artistic exchanges. It would be a new institution that linked these two long time allies together and it had some money in the bank. So, that foundation came to life. It exists today. I think we finally found a way to come up with a short squadron of F-5Es and we did some ship rebuilding and renovation for them and we found some tanks and that sort of stuff. I think we renegotiated a couple of small, slightly more political aspects of the base rights agreement. Those negotiations were then concluded by Ed Rowell quite successfully and the foundation was given a real shot in the arm during his time as ambassador. So the bilateral relationship, without any of the anxieties of the immediate post-revolutionary period, became one of those relationships that was managed in a much more routine way as it is today. Sad to say from a sort of narrow professional point of view, I think it was probably much more interesting and more fun to serve in Portugal right after the revolution and then again for a brief period in the late '80s than it might be to serve there today. I think it's a much quieter place now. I was glad I was there when I was. I left in 1990.

Q: Well, speaking of that, how did the events of particularly later in '89, the fall of the Berlin Wall and the Soviet Union is still intact but its change and all. How did that?

EGAN: Great confusion in Portugal. Great confusion because people were surprised by the speed of the disintegration, were not mentally or emotionally prepared for it to come so quickly and weren't satisfied or comfortable that things were going to be easier afterwards. A lot of concern about what this huge change in the traditional rules of the game in a European context meant in a regional sense, what it meant for the future of NATO.

Q: Yes, very much so.

EGAN: What it meant with respect to EC expansion and what it meant with respect to so many of those other problems in the world that had for so long been dominated by this bipolar rivalry in Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin South America, South Asia, the Far East. There was in fact a fairly prominent school of thought among Portuguese elites that the world was going to become a much more complicated and perhaps even more dangerous place with respect to regional conflicts. The Portuguese were unsure what it was going to mean for Portugal's place in the world and they were unsure what it was going to do to their two most important bilateral relationships with the U.S. and the UK.

It highlighted some of the differences between Portugal and Spain. Spain tends to look to central Europe and the Portuguese to the Atlantic powers. The Portuguese commercial agreement with Britain is I believe the oldest extant commercial treaty in the world. From both a political and a political/military perspective, would Lajes now be less important; was the Portuguese role in NATO less important? It was a period of considerable anxiety for the Portuguese. I think one of the things they did when I look back on it, now I'm not sure it was obvious to me at the time, but when I look back on it now I think they threw themselves into their commitment to a modern Europe particularly in the context to the EU with a rigor that might have been less pronounced if the Soviet Union still existed. I sensed that when I talked to Portuguese friends. The growth of Lisbon, parts of the wine industry, much of the broader agricultural sector, and the development of tourism in the south are now increasingly dominated by Europeans, especially French and German investment interests, much more so than when the British ran the port industry and the U.S. Air Force mowed the lawn at Lajes.

Q: I would imagine while you were there during part of this period that you had to spend an awful lot of time answering the question, do you still love us or do you still need us? People were really questioning NATO.

EGAN: Well, as I said Portuguese identification of its own role in the NATO alliance was very much on their mind. The Portuguese are too sophisticated and too self-confident and have dealt with us too long to ever approach such issues asking if we were still a friend. It's a much more sophisticated political elite than that. The question would arise not in terms of Portugal, but in terms of Western Europe NATO. When I was in Lisbon, their most important bilateral relationships and their most important diplomatic postings were their ambassador in Washington and London and their representatives to NATO and Brussels. Those were their key diplomatic postings.

Q: What about the relationship about the second time you were there with Spain? I mean you look at it.

EGAN: Very troubled.

Q: Portugal, you can't get there from here at least by land. I mean they're surrounded by Spain.

EGAN: It's a very complicated relationship. The Spanish throne ruled Portugal for 80 years in the late 16th Century. The Portuguese haven't forgotten it, nor have the Spanish. They are two countries that because of their history they don't face each other. They're not even side by side on the Iberian Peninsula, they're back to back and they look in very different directions. A lot of Spaniards that I have dealt with aren't quite sure why Portugal even exists. Why is there this funny place out there on the western coast? If they need to be, the Portuguese are very accomplished Spanish speakers. I have never met a Spaniard who will admit to or even try to speak reasonable Portuguese. It's a very uneasy relationship and the irony of course is that Juan Carlos the current king of Spain was raised outside of Lisbon. He was raised by his grandfather in Estoril. He learned to sail at the sailing club in Cascais.

The second time we were in Lisbon I used to notice that Embassy Madrid and Embassy Lisbon would work on issues and report to Washington and rarely kept the other embassy informed or rarely had a real dialogue with the other embassy on an Iberian issue. So we organized two summit meetings between Embassy Madrid and Embassy Lisbon. We met on the border for two days and we met for six or seven hours a day and had discussions on political, military, security, economic and all the other issues important to us and to the two countries.

Q: I think this is a good place to stop. Is there anything else we want to pick up the next time around still dealing with Portugal?

EGAN: I don't think so. By the second time I was there it had actually become a comparatively quiet place. This is a real break point for me because from here I go to the Middle East where I spent the rest of my career.

Q: Was there, we might just mention here, any influence because there's so many Portuguese particularly from the Azores immigrants to the United States and they had the.

EGAN: Most of the Portuguese community in the United States is not from continental Portugal but from the Azores and Madeira. Very few are from the mainland. The most prominent member of the United States congress with a Portuguese background was Tony Coelho, but he was a Californian of Azorean extraction. Issues related to the non-Brazilian Portuguese speaking constituency in the United States arose almost entirely with respect to issues that affected the Azores and very occasionally with Madeira, but principally with the Azores, including the negotiations that we went through periodically on our base rights issues at Lajes. There were very few occasions that I recall of the Portuguese community in the United States making its voice heard with respect to issues that were particular to the central government in Lisbon or regional European issues.

Q: Okay, well, Wes, the next time we'll pick this up when you're off to that tranquil spot known as the Middle East.

EGAN: Cairo.

Q: Cairo. This will be in 1990?

EGAN: The summer of 1990 two weeks before Iraq invaded Kuwait.

Q: Okay.

Q: After a certain hiatus we're back again. Today is the 19th of November, 2004, Wes, what did you, how did you get, what job did you have in Cairo, how long were you there and then we'll talk about the situation.

EGAN: I was the DCM in Cairo from the summer of 1990 until the summer of 1993. Frank Wisner was the ambassador and oddly, as had been the case when he called me to ask me to be his DCM in Lusaka in '79, I had a call one afternoon in Lisbon and he asked me if I would be his DCM in Cairo.

Q: All right. Well, when you arrived, this is the first two weeks you might say, what was preoccupying us I mean what did you expect to find? Did you see this almost purely as a management job because it's the biggest embassy in the world isn't it or something?

EGAN: I expected it to be a big embassy, which as you say, it was. I felt I didn't know very much about the Middle East. I had never served in the region. I did not speak Arabic. With the exception of a couple of years in Tripoli, Libya in the early '50s, it's a part of the world that I used to look at and when I thought about its contemporary politics, I used to say to myself, I will never understand this place. I'll never figure out who all these people are and what their histories are and what their grievances are. I remember, even in Lisbon, when we used to get instructions to go in the Portuguese government with a demarche on an issue related to the peace process or Israeli credentials, I always felt I had to think sort of extra hard about it to make sure I didn't sound uninformed. Frank Wisner was an old friend and his DCM, Jock Covey was leaving Cairo to return to a Washington assignment. Jock was leaving to become the senior deputy assistant secretary in NEA under John Kelly.

I got there I think around the middle of July, sometime after the 4th of July. I did not go back to Washington. I went from Lisbon to Cairo so I didn't have any consultations to Washington. Frank had not had leave in a long, long time. Within a couple of weeks of the time I arrived, he left for the United States on home leave. In early August of course Iraq invaded Kuwait. Washington was excited. The Egyptians were excited. Frank was sitting on the Eastern Shore of Maryland and of course within a week or so was back in Cairo.

Q: We'll come back to the management side later, but let's just deal with the Iraqi thing. What were you picking up at the beginning because the role of Egypt was sort of crucial to our understanding of what Saddam Hussein was not going to do almost? What were you, with Wisner and when you were there, what were you getting from the Egyptians about reading what Saddam was going to do?

EGAN: Well, despite the fact that there has never been love lost between the Egyptians and the Kuwaitis, the Egyptians saw this as a dangerous move that could not be allowed to stand. There was no hesitation in their mind that Baghdad, that Saddam Hussein, needed to be pushed back out of Kuwait. The territorial sovereignty issues and the petroleum issues and the northeastern oil fields in Saudi Arabia being important to the Egyptians as well. The Arab League was meeting in Cairo at the time and there were several key votes in the League on the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. We had views on those issues and communicated those views to the leadership of the League and the members. Those votes all supported our position and the broader Western position to the Iraqi invasion. When we then quickly began to pull together a very broadly based international coalition to resist Iraqi aggression when it became clear that he had no intention of leaving Kuwait, the Egyptians played a crucial role in the development of that international consensus and in the military buildup. Egypt was of important support to U.S. and other allied military components when the war was actually launched. We were pushing against an open door with respect to Egyptian policy and we needed Egyptian support, not only in a political way, we actually needed it militarily and logistically. We needed access for nuclear powered vessels to transit the Suez Canal and we needed an incredible number of overflight authorizations to get our personnel and our equipment into position in Saudi Arabia and in the Gulf.

Q: Let's say, when you arrived and by the time you arrived and even before Wisner left, but leading up to this, Saddam was making some moves, threatening Iraq and my understanding.

EGAN: Threatening Kuwait.

Q: I mean threatening Kuwait, my understanding is that the Egyptians were downplaying this as being, this is just Saddam playing games. I mean the Kuwaitis were, too. I mean were you getting that from the Egyptians?

EGAN: I don't recall because I arrived so soon before Iraq moved in Kuwait. There was a fair amount of noise in the weeks preceding the Iraqi push across the border. We took those maneuverings and public statements out of Baghdad seriously and thought they were worrisome and so did the Egyptians, but we and the Egyptians were surprised when he crossed into Kuwait. It was not to my memory a case of us waving a flag about a problem and having a close friend and ally in the region poo pooing our concerns. I don't remember that as being part of the Egyptian position at all. Having said that, some of the statements that came out of the Arab League and the steps that many Arab countries including Egypt took in response to the Iraqi invasion were really unprecedented. I mean this is not the way in which the states of the region have traditionally behaved. As I mentioned in the Egyptian cases there's no great love lost between the Egyptians and the Kuwaitis. In fact my experience is that the Kuwaitis are not wildly admired or respected anywhere in the region, but of course that wasn't the issue.

Q: No.

EGAN: The Egyptians also had the luxury of being a little bit distant from the action. The Egyptian/Saudi relationship was also part of the equation. That's a relationship that has sometimes been quite stressful and suspicious. Egypt played a critical role in the deployment of U.S. forces and the work of what was then a credible and legitimate international coalition.

You know, when a thing like the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait happens, everything gets thrown up in the air. One of the unique things about the Egyptian assignment for me was that I think it was really the first time in my Foreign Service career where I was stationed in a country that was so hugely important to the United States in a strategic and volatile region with really major, major policy issues at play. This was not Lisbon or Guinea-Bissau or Lusaka; this was the big leagues. It was quite overwhelming, not just the size of the mission and the headaches that come with trying to run such a big interagency mission, but just the policy import and the substantive import of the relationship itself to somebody who is new to the region, who has never particularly studied it, had never served there and who didn't speak the language. It was a handful, and not just for the first couple of weeks. I would say it took me almost a year before I felt that I had my feet on the ground and that I had the relationships I needed with the Egyptians to do my job.

Q: Just the management of the embassy, I mean when you've got a war on, everybody kind of has I mean there are very obvious priorities that you have to deal with an awful lot of stuff as you were saying, sort of goes out the window, sort of the niceties of this or that to get the job done. How did you find the embassy put together? I'm thinking of.

EGAN: I think it probably fit together better during the crisis period than it did under normal circumstances. The requirements of the war were so clear and of such a high priority. The embassy, I don't want to say it stopped doing what wasn't essential, but it certainly devoted 90% of its energy to the buildup to the war and the prosecution of the war and the aftermath. I mean we started, rather than having a country team meeting everyday, we had, the ambassador and I and the station chief, had a military brief every morning at 7:30 followed by a country team meeting everyday. The Embassy ran seven days a week. Whereas most embassies in the region drew down their embassy staff and in many cases sent family and dependents home, we probably increased our staff by about 10% or 15%, most of that on the military and the agency side. There was no draw down of staff. Family and dependents stayed at post. It geared up, it focused, it drew on the relationships that people had been working on for years. It had an easy coordinating relationship with Washington, with military commands in the region and in Europe, and with the Egyptian political, military, and intelligence authorities. It was probably the most intense, sustained, pressurized, professional atmosphere I have ever worked in. The military staff of the embassy was unusual in that the defense attaché's office was actually fairly small whereas the office of military cooperation which ran the military assistance program was, as I recall, 125 uniformed military personnel, not counting their civilian staff, both American and Egyptian. It was lead by a major general and the defense attaché was a colonel. The office of military cooperation had the goodies, the defense attaché's office did not. The office of military cooperation and the agency were more central to our response than the defense attaché's office.

Q: How did you find the relationship between sort of the embassy itself and the agency kind of when you arrived and how did it fit together when all of this happened?

EGAN: Well, I found the relationship with the agency a very good one. It was a large and a very busy station. The COS [Chief of Station] had a very close relationship with Egyptian intelligence. The station chief's relationship with the ambassador and myself was terrific. It was built on a lot of trust and a lot of common sense. The station chief at the time was one of the, I would say the best agency officer I have ever worked with. He's now retired from the service. He was not an Arabic language specialist, not even a regional specialist, but in terms of managing his own staff and assets and his relationship with his Egyptian counterparts, his relationship with the front office and his skill in dealing with other elements of the embassy, particularly the political section and the public affairs section, he was the best station chief I have known and certainly the best one I have ever worked with. Everybody was so busy and so stretched that the irritants that are normally a part of interagency relationships, particularly sometimes between agency personnel and State staff or AID staff, were minimal during this period. That was in retrospect a great advantage to me because I got to know these guys during a period in which there was no question that everybody was there to do a job together. It was a very healthy environment to work in. It ran about a year into the summer of 1991 in its most active form and then we kind of ran on the fumes of that at least for my last two years there because there weren't very many senior personnel changes during that period except for the ambassador. So the station chief, the AID director, the defense attaché^{1/2}, and the public affairs officer who I worked with through '91 and '92 and into '93 were the very people with whom I had made my relationships during the run up to the war and the war itself. So I was lucky.

Q: What was your reading of the Egyptian officials with whom you were dealing both the military and the civilian, you know, intelligence military and foreign affairs?

EGAN: That embassy's access to the leadership, from Mubarak on down, was unlike the access I have seen in any bilateral relationship. I don't think there was another DCM in Cairo who either as DCM or as charge would ever meet directly with Mubarak, the intelligence chief, the chief of staff of the armed forces, or the foreign minister. I did, not because I was Wes Egan, but because this was the American Embassy. Now, you didn't abuse those relationships. You used them carefully, but when you needed to use them, they were there.

Right after the World Trade Center bombing in New York in 1993, I was chargé^{1/2}, the FBI was after a suspect. I got a message very late one night telling me that he was an American citizen and that the FBI thought that he was in Egypt. We wanted him back in New York. Charlie Wilson was visiting at the time.

Q: Charlie Wilson being a congressman from Texas.

EGAN: Congressman Charlie Wilson from Texas, the guy with the stinger over the door of his office up on the Hill. I was taking him to a meeting with President Mubarak. We got to Mubarak's office, sat down, and had a conversation about a variety of things. In the course of that conversation, I said to the president, "There's an American citizen who we are looking for as suspect in the World Trade Center bombings and we think he's in Egypt. If he is, we would like to make arrangements to get him back to New York." The President said he would look into it. A day or so later I had a call from the head of Egyptian intelligence who said the suspect was not in Egypt. Our information was pretty good that he was and that he was in Alexandria. So, I went back to the president and suggested that if his people looked in Alexandria they would probably find him. We know from other sources that following that meeting the president called his head of intelligence and said, "The Americans know he's here. We need to make arrangements to pick him up and surrender him." Meanwhile, I got a message from Washington saying that in fact the suspect was not an American citizen, but an Egyptian/German dual national with resident alien status in the United States. So, I got what I thought was one of the sillier messages I'd ever received from the Department of State that told me to draft a diplomatic note to the ministry of foreign affairs to explain this, but to say that we still wanted him. I went back to Washington and I said the last person in the world we should be talking to about this was the ministry of foreign affairs, and that if they become part of the process, we'll never get our hands on the suspect. I told Washington I didn't think we should tell the Egyptians that he was not an American because this was not an extradition request, we didn't have an extradition treaty with Egypt. There were several messages back and forth and lots of irate phone calls from Washington. Washington finally agreed. But I went to some lengths to make sure that the assistant secretary for NEA and the director of counter terrorism and the director of diplomatic security all knew what we were doing because I was a little worried about what level of the Department these instructions were coming from.

Q: You might explain for somebody looking at this, was this sort of almost an aftermath of the Ollie North thing or somebody, concern that somebody might be doing this without, as you say grown adults, or senior people.

EGAN: Cairo was the first posting I had during which I grew suspicious and careful of Washington instructions. Too much was done by the telephone. Fortunately this was before the days of e-mails because I think it's probably even worse now. I remember a call at 3:00 one morning from a reasonably senior person in the Department who spent most of the conversation screaming at me on the telephone asking if I didn't know there was a war on? Now, to say that to somebody who is in the field and who is part of the process of doing something about that war, struck me as the ultimate in Washington arrogance. Cairo was the first place I began to grow skeptical and suspicious of instructions and directives from Washington on really fast-moving issues of high visibility.

Q: I interviewed our ambassador in Jordan at the time you were dealing with this.

EGAN: Roger Harrison.

Q: Roger Harrison who was saying he was getting these things about, he was to go to King Hussein and give him holy hell on this and that for not being on the team and all this. He just ignored them because you know the people in Washington; I mean they want to feel they're doing something and they're in control of the situation and don't understand the politics.

EGAN: Roger arrived in Jordan as ambassador almost exactly the same time I arrived in Cairo as DCM and he had a horrible tour. In addition to your point about their wanting to be players and wanting to be seen to be doing something important in the management of a crisis, all of which is sort of understandable, and I've probably done the same thing during some of my time on the 7th floor. There is often a feeling that the people in the field really don't, aren't capable, don't know what they're doing. It just is not true and yet it's not an uncommon view from folks in Washington even career Foreign Service types in Washington. It is not restricted to Schedule C political appointees and it's that aspect of it that I think often is so infuriating to folks who are doing the job on the ground in the field. People back here, after all, can go home and drink the water. They're not in the midst of it seven days a week 24 hours a day. It leaves a very bad taste in your mouth. I think any of us that have been in positions like that could probably give you a long list of instructions that we've received from the "highest authority" that we have chosen not to implement.

The worst manifestation of it and I think it's more common today even than it was then, is Washington's habit of sending you the exact text of your talking points. This idea, this finely crafted language in Washington that you're going to sit there and read them verbatim to whoever you're speaking to on the host government side, I mean I don't know of very many Foreign Service Officers that actually work that way. There's an old expression that says if you have a very important mission or objective to accomplish, pick a very smart person to do it for you and don't tell them what to do. We could learn a lot if we remembered that. That was a big part of my first year in Cairo and I didn't like it.

Q: I interviewed Chas Freeman our ambassador to Saudi Arabia at the time and an inordinate amount of his time was taking congressmen out just to see the troops, they were there mainly to look good to the constituents.

EGAN: Cairo was also a place, and this was particularly true to the run up to the war, I think in the first 12 months I was there we had 800 congressional visitors. Some of those repeats, but 800 times a congressman stepped off the plane. In the case of Cairo it was also because the assistance account was so huge, the second largest in the world and of course those funds are congressionally appropriated and so important committee members and chairmen feel they've got a particular interest in the way those funds are used and of course there is a lot of politics in the AID account and how it was structured. The fun things about that time in Cairo were developing the relationships with the Egyptians that allowed us to do some of the things that we did and seeing it work. We became a sort of rear base for Colin Powell, chairman of the joint chiefs, and for then Secretary of Defense Cheney. Those two were probably in Cairo every six weeks or so and we were a small part of their discussion and consultations to the actual execution of the war. We had, we actually built in the desert out beyond the pyramids a landing strip and a small base for about 2,000 U.S. air force National Guard folks led by one active duty colonel. They flew 17 or 18 KC-135 refueling missions a day during the war. We actually provided about half the aerial refueling for U.S. forces in the Gulf during the war. Half of that was provided by this little installation sitting out in the desert just west of the pyramids. We actually borrowed from the Egyptians 100 heavy equipment transport trucks, HETs. We did not have the transport on the Arabian Peninsula to move tanks and vehicles around and up towards the front and the process of getting the Egyptians to loan us 100 of these things and transporting them to Yanbu and getting them all the way across Saudi Arabia up towards the Kuwaiti border was, that kind of stuff, was great fun because it had an immediate operational impact. It was important to get done for the military component the field. It was desired by Washington and you couldn't have done it if you didn't have the relationships that so many people in that embassy had with their Egyptian counterparts. At least you couldn't have done it as quickly. I think we also probably moved about 10,000 U.S. and allied air craft through Egyptian air space in the prep for that war and we probably did more nuclear powered transits through the Suez Canal in a two or three month period than had ever been done.

Q: Had that been an issue before?

EGAN: Big issue. The Egyptians didn't want nuclear powered or nuclear ships with nuclear weapons transiting the canal. It was a really heady period. When the war was over it was followed by the preparations for the peace conference in Madrid.

Q: Which concerned Israel?

EGAN: It concerned Israel, but it also concerned all of the Arab states and certainly including the Egyptians. So, we went from an intense war fighting period to an almost equally intense peacefighting period in the late summer and fall of '91. The Madrid peace conference was not only great fun to be part of, but it was one of those really historic events. Important things happened in Madrid and important things happened later because of Madrid. I was sitting at home one night in Cairo in November 1991 and the telephone rang. It was somebody from the Secretary's party in Tel Aviv who told me that Secretary Baker was going to announce that the Spanish have agreed to host a peace conference in Madrid and could I be in Madrid in two days? I think they'd gone to several of the DCMs in the region and asked us to get to Madrid quickly to organize, shape, and structure that peace conference and then to stay on as liaison officers between the Secretary's party, and in my case, the Egyptian delegation. Just being part of that process was one of the most rewarding of my own career. Ed Djerejian was the Assistant Secretary at the time. My Cairo experience was also the first time that the pressures of the job began to have a physical impact on me in terms of blood pressure, stress, and that sort of stuff. I think it had that effect on a lot of people who served in that embassy not just because the work was so intense, but because Cairo is not an easy place to live. It's a city of 15 or 16 million people on a workday and even what little private life you have is also very intense. That's the nature of life in that city.

I learned a lot in Cairo. Frank Wisner moved on after about a year and a half and Bob Pelletreau replaced him as ambassador. Bob asked me to stay on for another year and a half or so which I was glad to do. I remember one of the first questions he asked me was what had been the secret of Frank's success. Frank Wisner had by that time been the ambassador in Cairo for over five years. Frank knew everybody. Frank was always everywhere. Frank never stopped running. A man of almost unhuman energy and stamina and sense of purpose and a linguist and a guy who had in fact devoted a large part of his career to the Arab world. Bob and Frank Wisner are very different personalities. They studied together as young men, I think in Casablanca, in the late '50s or early '60s. They were Arabic language students together. They're good friends, but they are very, very different personalities. I said that I thought Frank has made it his business to know just about everybody of any consequence in this relationship over the last five years. He was constantly on the move and there was no more prominent public face of the United States in Cairo or anywhere in Egypt than Frank Wisner. When Frank was getting ready to leave, he was making his farewell call on President Mubarak. Oddly enough the meeting took place not at the president's normal offices, but at the headquarters offices of the party, of the NDP, which of course he was also the head of. It was not far from the embassy. Frank was on his way to Manila as ambassador and Mubarak who really liked Frank said, "Frank, why are you leaving?" They had developed an extraordinary relationship over a five year period. Mubarak said, "Why are you leaving us? Why are you going to the Philippines? Don't you know that they eat dogs in the Philippines?" It was that kind of a wonderful farewell call.

When we finished, Frank decided that we weren't going to drive back to the embassy office. We were going to walk. It was maybe half a mile through one of the most busy, congested, dense parts of the city, including Tahir Square. Tahir Square is one of the main open areas in the city and is always teeming with buses and taxies and things being sold on the street and people and donkeys and camels and all kinds of stuff. It took us maybe an hour and a half to walk back to the embassy because every 15 or 20 feet somebody on the street, in one case a taxi cab driver, stopped to ask Frank why he was leaving. This is 1991, late summer 1991. Just think of it from a security perspective. Can you imagine an American ambassador today even taking a walk like that? But more than that, can you imagine in a place like Cairo people coming up to him on the street. They knew who he was, they recognized his face, they felt they had a personal relationship with him, and they were sad that he was leaving. These were not people who sat with him and talked of policy over a cup of coffee. These were people who just swelled up to him. It took us an hour and a half to make that walk. I cannot imagine that sort of thing happening. I can't imagine it actually happening anywhere in the world today with an American ambassador who has been at post any length of time. How sad that you can't imagine that happening.

Bob Pelletreau followed him and ran the embassy his way as ambassadors do, also very effectively, but very differently and through a different period. I then left in 1993 to go to Jordan. Cairo was really my first overseas experience at a policy level that was that important and that intense, and it altered my view of dealings with Washington.

Q: Going back to a couple of things. What were you getting from your military people about the performance of the Egyptian military and maybe some of the other Arab militaries that were part of the coalition?

EGAN: Well, I think there has always been a very high level of respect among our professional military for the Egyptian air force. In part I'm sure because we have provided so much equipment to the air force and so much sophisticated training and because Mubarak himself was an air force pilot. I think there was always a kind of special feeling about the Egyptian air force. In terms of the senior levels of the ground forces there was a lot of respect for the integrity and the professional confidence of the general staff, certainly for whoever was the chief of staff of the army or the chairman of the joint staff at the time. These were not only serious competent professional military men, but they were also people who potentially had political futures. Omar Soliman having been a senior army officer and head of Egyptian intelligence, there was a period in which people could think of this guy as a possible successor to Mubarak himself. These were major players in the political life of Egypt as well. The further down you went in the structure of any of those services, the more difficult it became to have as much confidence. The most important thing was the presence of these units. Not so much what they did, but simply the fact that they were there or that their states provided the rear guard or logistic support that made other things possible closer to the front lines.

There was a wonderful story circulating in Cairo during the war about Syrians and the Syrian role in the coalition. The president of Syria.

Q: Assad.

EGAN: Assad, is said to have turned to his minister of defense after getting a message from Secretary Baker, he turned to his minister of defense and told him to put together and dispatch to Saudi Arabia a division to be part of the coalition effort to push Saddam Hussein out of Iraq. The minister saluted him and went off. A couple of days later Assad asked if the division had left yet. The minister said not quite yet. Assad said he wanted it to move immediately. The minister saluted but Assad saw him two days later and the division still has not gone. Assad got quite irritated and asked what the problem was. The minister said he hadn't been able to reach agreement with the Saudis about who was going to pay for the deployment of this Syrian ground division and he didn't want to dispatch the division to the Arabian Peninsula until he had an agreement. Assad got furious. He looked at his minister and said, "Minister, you don't understand. I want that division in Saudi Arabia within 24 hours and we won't bring it back until we've agreed whose going to pay."

We relied very heavily on the Egyptians for support to the air war, support to refueling aircraft in that war and to the movement of our heavy equipment around the Arabian Peninsula. There are elements of that campaign that would not have been as successful had it not been for the Egyptian contribution. So, its really important in a public relations kind of a way and in the Egyptian case it was also real and important as a practical matter.

Q: What was the reaction at the end of the war, I mean, right now we're up to our necks in Iraq, somewhat as a consequence for not having so-called finished off the Gulf War by not doing the full thing then. What was the reaction at the time when really the decision was going to be made, do we take a couple more days and wipe out some of the elite troops or do we just declare Kuwait liberated and end the war?

EGAN: I really think this is a fake issue. I don't believe that question was asked at the time. I don't believe that issue ever arose at that time. When Baker created that 29 or 30 nation coalition, the idea was sold to those states that participated on the basis of very straightforward objective and that was getting Iraqi forces out of Kuwait and then securing the Kuwaiti border against further incursions by Iraqi military units. It was, in my view, it was on that basis, it was certainly on that basis that Egypt became a part of that coalition and I believe it was on that basis that every other partner in that coalition agreed to participate. If the question had arisen the way you just phrased it, and if there had been some decision on our part to press on to Baghdad to, as a lot of people today like to say, finish the job, the coalition would have disappeared in a shot in my view, and we, possibly with the British, but certainly not with the French, would have been standing there in the southern Iraqi desert all alone. The credibility that the U.S. role and the role of the coalition played is what made it possible to hold the peace conference in Madrid and it's what made it possible for the United States to play the role it played in the Israeli Palestinian conflict and the peace process more broadly up through in my view the late 1990s. I would say until 1998 or 1999. But there is no doubt in my mind that if we had ever gone, regardless of what people in Washington might have been thinking at the time, if we had actually gone to any of our partners in that coalition and said, okay, we got them out of Kuwait, but we're not really finished, we need to press on to Baghdad and "finish this job," that coalition would have vanished and we would not have been able to draw on the success of that war and the success of that coalition to make it possible to do what happened in Madrid and then for seven or eight years later. So, I really think it's a fake issue.

Q: Okay. So, now what the Madrid conference. What was this designed to do and how did it work out?

EGAN: I was not part of the discussions in Washington on that initiative, but there was a feeling in the administration and certainly on the part of Jim Baker that the lack of progress in resolving the Israeli Palestinian dispute was a serious issue of concern to us. It made a region of the world that was important to us vulnerable and volatile. There hadn't been very much going on in the peace process prior to the Gulf war. The cooperation developed with the Arab states of the region in prosecuting that war, the credibility of our policy and actions leading that coalition, the fact that the Palestinians and Saddam had grossly miscalculated the international reaction to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, the fact that the Israelis knew that we had taken steps that were important to their long term security interests, and that we had kept them out of the conflict itself to the point of not responding to scud strikes that fell in Israel, gave us a level of credibility and influence in the region that had not been the case before and if not put to some good use might not last forever. Fundamental to all this was a belief that that administration held, that we had a national security interest, a practical reason and a moral obligation to do what we could to resolve the Israeli Palestinian conflict and more broadly the Israeli Arab conflict; and they acted on that basis. Jim Baker himself is very tough and persuasive. He was a Secretary of State who spoke authoritatively for the President. That has not always been the case, but it was with Jim Baker. The concept of getting not only the Arab states, but also, a Palestinian delegation as part of the Jordanian delegation to address the difficulty that the Shamir government in Israel had sitting down across the table directly with the PLO was I think a stroke of genius. And the Jordanians were eager to be helpful because they were as concerned as they were about the nature of their own relationship with us given the fact that they had stood on the sidelines during the Gulf War. You can talk about the reasons for that at length, but from the Washington perspective it was one of these very simple equations, you're not with us, so you're against us. The Jordanians had a lot of reasons to want to be helpful, in part because of their own tortured relationship with the PLO. So, all of those factors I think were orchestrated very skillfully by President Bush and Secretary of State Baker. That conference was a success in and of itself, but it was also the basis for much of what followed. I mean if you hadn't had Madrid, I don't believe Oslo would have taken place and if you hadn't of had Oslo, I don't believe the Israeli-Jordanian treaty of the fall of 1994 would have ever been concluded. For a brief period between 1994 and 1998 there was real hope and real expectations that good things could happen among Israelis, Palestinians and Jordanians. Madrid was a critical event and it capitalized on a degree of credibility and influence that the United States had in the region at that time and that we have now lost.

Q: Absolutely.

EGAN: Pat Kennedy was the sort of organizational majordomo of the Madrid conference. Margaret Tutwiler and another close aide to Baker were the wizards that we all reported to and from whom we took our direction on the shape of the table, the venue, who was going to sit where, who was going to speak first, and all of that kind of stuff. We were all based in the Palacio Hotel downtown. The bilateral and multilateral tracks agreed to in Madrid produced things like the Middle East North Africa Economic Summit process which started in Casablanca and was held once in Amman in 1995. All of those things produced benefits and none of them would have been possible had it not been for the inspiration on which the Madrid conference was based. It was a really good time to be an American diplomat in the Middle East, a really good time.

Q: Today.

EGAN: It's not.

Q: It's not. What about, I mean just to cover a couple of things we didn't talk about, what about Abu Halima?

EGAN: We got him despite some of the fussiness from colleagues in Washington. The FBI sent a plane to Cairo International Airport and we parked it in the shadows on the military side of the airport, Abu Halima was taken into custody by the Egyptians in Alexandria, taken to the airport very late at night, and surrendered to the custody of a federal agent standing on the bottom step of a little gangway in this small jet aircraft. About 10 hours later he was in a federal courthouse downtown in Manhattan.

Q: This brings up a question though, what were our readings of the fundamentalists, the Islamists in Egypt at that time?

EGAN: It was becoming a concern. This was before the killings in Assyut, the attacks on tourists. This was before at least one attempt on Mubarak's life. There was a lot of concern about the presence and the activities of young men who had been recruited to fight with the mujahideen in Afghanistan against the Russians who had received a good bit of lethal training and weapons who were now unemployed, but with those skills back on the street and very vulnerable to recruitment by the Muslim brothers, and Islamic Jihad. We were especially worried about them in the Sudan. We didn't yet have a particularly high level of anxiety about them in Egypt. The Mubarak regime had been fairly successful and ruthless in either coopting or locking them up since Sadat's assassination. There were concerns in Egypt as men associated either with the Brotherhood, which started in Egypt in the late '20s, or Islamic Jihad began to run for and win office in trade unions and professional associations. To my mind this was something we had not seen as a particular factor in Egyptian domestic political life before. The professional associations of doctors, dentists, lawyers, and such and the trade union associations were appealing legal organizations and institutions with an established role in Egyptian society. They were viewed in many cases as vehicles by which those with those sympathies could gain a broader and more legitimate reputation and role in Egyptian domestic political life. That was just beginning when I left Cairo in 1993.

The security situation and the nature of that threat to Mubarak's government increased steadily from about '93 to '94. At one point during our time in Egypt we had actually cruised from Aswan to Cairo. It took two weeks. It was a wonderful experience and we saw things in the desert that you almost cannot get to by vehicle. You can't do that anymore. You can cruise back and forth between Aswan and Luxor, but the cruise boats no longer run the full navigable length of the Nile.

The political section in the embassy for most of that period was led by Ryan Crocker who is now ambassador to Pakistan and later by Stan Escudero who had been General Schwarzkopf's pol/ad before coming to Cairo.

Q: Stan?

EGAN: Stan Escudero. He went from Cairo I think to be our first ambassador in Tajikistan. He's an Arabic speaker and I think he also spoke Farsi. We had two really superb political counselors at post. Despite the size of the embassy and despite the sort of top heavy nature of the relationship, meaning so much of it was done at such a high level, they developed contacts and were able to do reporting on fundamentalist issues, human rights issues, opposition party politics in general that I think was probably unprecedented. One of the finest reporters in that whole section was Ron Schlicher who eventually was our Consul General in Jerusalem. He was certainly one of the most productive and most skillful reporting officer in the section and built a career as one of the Service's most talented Arabists.

The first 12 months, the issue was the war. The next six months the issue was the peace process. From my perspective, it wasn't until perhaps the spring or summer of 1992 that the more routine aspects of reporting and analysis really came back to the forefront of the embassy's work. The resurgence of the fundamentalist threat in Cairo increased rapidly after that period. The security situation deteriorated and I expect those working at that embassy today have an experience of life in Egypt that is totally different than ours only slightly over 10 years ago.

Q: Was there concern anywhere in our operation there about the essential non-democratic regime that had always been in Egypt?

EGAN: Yes, but it was of secondary importance. The fact that Egypt was not a democracy was of less importance than Egyptian support in the Gulf War and on other issues that we felt were key to our own national and strategic interests in the region. I don't ever remember a conversation by anybody with Mubarak about democracy building. I watched a lot of people from Washington including the President sit with him but not to discuss democratic reforms.

The President was in Kuwait on Thanksgiving Day of 1990. CNN had just begun in Egypt and for a while it was free. You could get it for a couple of hours a day on broadcast television, not cable, there was no cable

Q: It was the greatest show. Everybody watched CNN all over the world.

EGAN: I remember sitting in Cairo watching the President having Thanksgiving at a long trestle table with American troops in Kuwait and looking at my watch and turning to my wife and saying I've got to go to the airport because the President's arriving in two hours. It gave a sense of, I don't know, immediacy that was unprecedented in my foreign service experience. I mean when I served in South Africa, you had to book a call to the United States a week ahead. At one point in his visit he came to the embassy and every embassy employee, American and Egyptian and every American family member was invited to come to the embassy courtyard to meet the President. That would probably not happen today. There must have been 3,000 people in that courtyard. The President stood up there obviously unprompted, thanked the ambassador for what had been a very successful visit, thanked all the people that had made this visit possible and then said, "But I know from my time in Beijing that the person who really makes these visits work is the deputy chief of mission." Of course I was delighted. But as I was saying, democratic reform was not an important item on the bilateral agenda.

Q: I know and that's why I'm hitting this thing just to set up sort of benchmarks for this. I mean it's something that comes up back here in Washington from time to time by commentators and all.

EGAN: You know, Stu, my first tour was in South Africa. I was not in the embassy in Pretoria. I was in a small but very busy consulate general in Durban. I was there in the early '70s. Apartheid was still the order of the day and I spent a lot of time dealing with English speaking opposition politics and politicians and a lot of time dealing with the black student movement and people like Steve Biko and Barney Pityana. I said at the outset that I was not sitting in country team meetings in the embassy in Pretoria and I saw the ambassador maybe once every three or four months. Despite our own civil rights history and the issue of race relations in the United States, I don't remember a lot of thumping on the table in South Africa in 1972 and 1973 on issues of democratization and opening up the apartheid system or dismantling the apartheid system. We used to talk about it as the U.S. view, but it was certainly not a very aggressive stance and it was not something that I recall us making a regular issue of with the political leadership in that country. Jim Baker, a black Foreign Service Officer, the first black Foreign Service Officer we ever assigned to South Africa arrived while we were there. That was a statement that we made very intentionally. Of course the South African reaction to that was that Jim lived in a bubble. There was never any possibility of anything unpleasant happening to Jim Baker during his tour in South Africa. Every butcher shop, every gas station in the country I suspect had a photograph of Jim Baker and the instruction was if this guy comes in to your restaurant or your butcher shop or your gas station, treat him with friendship and respect. It was a very difficult assignment for Jim because it was hard for him to get outside of that and interact with the majority of South Africans. Between 1970 and 1990, I didn't serve in Portugal during Salazar, democratic reform just was not a front and center issue.

Q: What was your impression of our AID program in Egypt because this is the huge, I mean I guess it was the biggest one we had and you really can't call it an AID project in Israel.

EGAN: It's a check writing procedure in Israel.

Q: Yes.

EGAN: The AID program, the non-military assistance relationship with the Egyptians was unique, not just because of its size, but because it was a program in which the first thing that was established was the dollar level and the work was to figure out how to use that funding productively. In most cases you have to fight for just about every penny in your AID budget. This was very much, this was driven from the top down.

Q: The level of funding was essentially established by a relationship to Israel, wasn't it?

EGAN: That's right.

Q: And then.

EGAN: The proportion was set at the time of the Camp David Agreements in 1978. When I got to Cairo in 1990, the AID program was dominated by projects. I mean we had all kinds of projects. We were rebuilding the sewer system in Cairo and in Alexandria. They were at the time I believe the largest bilateral assistance programs of any country in the world. I mean these projects involved billions of dollars over decades. We were trying to help them create a financial market. We were building health clinics to improve the infant mortality rate and to reduce the number of children that died of dehydration as a result of dysentery. We were involved in some project in almost every aspect of Egyptian domestic life and it was because the account was so dominated by projects, all of which were very labor intensive, that the AID staff itself was so large. There were I think about 125 U.S. AID officers in that mission. The mission was physically outside the embassy, which I think is almost always a bad idea. Of course the AID director in Cairo was always one of the most senior career AID officials. Buster Brown was the AID director when I got there.

We wanted to reduce the size of the AID mission and we wanted to shift the account from one dominated by labor intensive projects to an account that included more cash transfers as incentives for specific types of economic financial and other structural reform. Frank and I developed a rough formula whereby every few hundred million dollars that we shifted from the project side of the ledger to cash transfer would produce a proportional reduction in the USAID staff. We began to reduce the USAID staff in 1991. I have no idea whether that has continued, but the theory was that if we were really after was a level of economic and structural reform to encourage more open markets, more opportunities for U.S. business and trade, a more transparent and equitable economic system that the long term benefits of that would surpass the long term benefits of, for example, rebuilding a school in a small village in upper Egypt. It was slightly controversial. The AID director, I'm sure, saw it as an infringement of his authorities. It has always been important for ambassadors in Cairo to be strong and dominant personalities. Otherwise the heavily funded AID mission would just as likely go off on its own. That was not true under Frank Wisner, it was not true under Bob Pelletreau, but it takes a very strong ambassador to hold the AID mission and the office of military cooperation together. Managing those interagency relationships was a big part of the DCM's job as well.

It reminds me of something back in 1975 after the fall of Saigon. Graham Martin, our last ambassador to Vietnam, returned to Washington and went into Walter Reed suffering from exhaustion. This was during the Pike and the Church committee hearings on intelligence. They wanted to talk to Martin about his time as ambassador to Rome during the Italian elections in 1972. The administration didn't particularly want him to testify so they kept him under wraps at Walter Reed for months. But finally they couldn't avoid it any longer and he was scheduled to testify before the Pike committee. I was in the Secretary's office at the time and I played a small role in organizing his appearance. Graham Martin came to me and said he wanted somebody from the Department to be there with him and would I come. I wasn't sure what the Secretary's reaction to that would be or what Larry Eagleburger's reaction to it would be, but Larry Eagleburger told me to go ahead. Bill Colby, the DCI, was also testifying. Colby had told the Committee about the disagreements between the station chief in Rome and Ambassador Martin. So, when Martin was sworn and began to respond to questions, Otis Pike said to him he thought the problem was a classic example of interagency rivalry. Graham Martin looked at him and said he didn't understand what the Chairman meant. Graham Martin was a very patrician Virginian. Graham Martin then said that he had been in the diplomatic service 30 years and had held half a dozen ambassadorial postings. Never in his career, he said, had he considered himself a representative of a Department or agency of the United States government. Rather he said he had always represented the President. Otis Pike was slackjawed. The questioning went off in a different direction and Graham Martin made the point he intended to make. That's an extreme example of what I mean. Ambassadors in places like Cairo need to be seen as above the interagency bickering. Without that attitude, and the ability to make good on it, an Embassy like Cairo, because of its size, because of the level of Washington interest, and because of the money involved, can easily fragment and disintegrate under the watch of a lesser person.

Q: Did you find yourself in a position of being a monitor or an overseer to make sure AID didn't get off the range?

EGAN: Well, it was something that the ambassador and I did together. The advantage I had was that there was never any daylight between the ambassador and myself once an issue had been decided. I think people knew that I would argue whatever I thought the right position was as aggressively with him as anybody else on that embassy staff, but that once a decision was made then that was the way we went. I would argue positions often on behalf of other senior members of the country team including on occasion the AID rep and the OMC chief if I thought they were right. Once the direction had been determined and those decisions were always taken in a very open and transparent way, Frank worked that way. The country team was 25 or 27 people and we met everyday, and people were in and out of his office all day long. He was never remote. He's just had these incredible interpersonal skills that he was all over the place and he was all over town. My relationship, for example with the AID director or the OMC chief, had to be my own. It had to be more than simply a derivative relationship from the ambassador's own. It had to be one of my own and it had to be distinguishable from their relationship with him which led to a situation in which when they had problems with something he wanted to do or intended to do or thought we should do, or they had a problem with the way he was dealing with a particular issue, they would often come to me and say, I've got a real problem with this and my folks in Washington have a real problem with this. If I thought what they were saying had merit and needed to be considered then I would move it forward for them or I would encourage them or we would move it forward together. My view has always been that regardless of the size of the embassy a DCM has got to be somebody who other agency heads view as an asset and not as an obstacle. If you do that successfully, then you in fact assume an enormous amount of authority with those other agency heads. You become useful to them. If your relationship to them is an honest one and if you will help them work an issue with the ambassador if it's got merit and really is something that deserves his attention, then your authority is credible. By the same token, if they are off base, you've got to have the credibility to say to the general or to the AID director, this is ridiculous, don't be silly, of course we're not going to do that. But to say no and to have that no stick so that the next day you don't find that the guy has gone to your boss and said, oh, Egan, just wouldn't let me in the door on this one. You've got to work on those relationships on the job. It doesn't come with the title.

Q: Last thing on.

EGAN: So, yes is the short answer to your question. I needed to know what was going on throughout the mission on a day to day basis more so than the ambassador, more so than any ambassador probably could in a mission that size.

Q: How did Israel factor in to what you all were doing at that time?

EGAN: The first Israeli ambassador to Egypt was there when I was there. He also then later became the Israeli ambassador to Jordan when I was in Amman. It was a very awkward and unnatural relationship. His access was severely limited. One of the things that is so different about the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty as opposed to the Jordanian peace treaty is that the Egyptian-Israeli treaty and the Camp David agreements were in many respects a blueprint for a disengagement and a cessation of hostilities. The parties were moved apart and lines were drawn and a staged withdrawal from the Sinai was laid out and the monitoring mechanisms to enforce those agreements was established in the Multilateral Force.

Q: Sinai peace.

EGAN: Exactly. The agreement was basically designed to pull two antagonists apart. The Jordanian-Israeli agreement had an aspect of that in that for the first time there was an internationally agreed border drawn between Jordan and Israel from the southern tip of the Dead Sea to the Gulf of Aqaba. North of that it had always been the Jordan River, but south of that there was a British demarcation line, but it never had been internationally recognized. So there was an element of disengagement in the sense that a border was clearly defined. Most of the Jordanian-Israeli treaty dealt with scientific and educational exchanges, trade, security cooperation, how they were going to do things together, not how they were going to stand apart. It's a fundamental difference in my mind between the two agreements. The result of that was that whereas the Israeli ambassador in Amman was there to implement cooperative elements of a relationship. The Israeli ambassador in Cairo didn't have that role because he was basically the product of a military disengagement. Shimon Shamir was the ambassador. He's not a professional diplomat. He's an academic. He's published widely on Egypt and is a real Egyptian expert and is a wonderful person. He had a very tough time and was a bit isolated; lots of the members of the diplomat corps were hesitant to engage very much with him.

Q: Is there anything else we talk about before we?

EGAN: No.

Q: Okay. If you think of anything, when we start our next session, we can do it.

Q: Where did you go from Cairo?

EGAN: I was ready to leave Cairo the summer of 1993 and Ed Djerejian, who was assistant secretary at the time, put my name forward as the next ambassador to Kuwait. It went so far that I was even asked to select a DCM and a public affairs officer for Kuwait. But then because of other moves among American ambassadors in the region, I was also asked about going to Jordan. When I left Cairo, what I knew was that I was either going to be nominated as the next ambassador to Kuwait or the next ambassador to Jordan. I got back to the States in the summer of 1993 not knowing and I didn't know until September or October.

Q: Okay, so we'll pick it up then. Great.

Today is the 17th of December, 2004. Wes, let's talk about, what was the situation with Jordan internally in Jordan and also with the United States in '94 when you got there?

EGAN: My predecessor in Amman was Roger Harrison.

Q: I've interviewed Roger.

EGAN: Roger and I met at least once back in Washington before I left. Roger had arrived in Amman two or three days before the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. He arrived in Amman at the same time I arrived in Cairo and because of King Hussein's decision not to be part of the coalition that President Bush and Secretary Baker had put together to push the Iraqis out of Kuwait, Jordan was in very bad repute in Washington. My sense was that the authorities in Washington made it very clear to the King and to his government and probably to any other Jordanian official who would listen, that the White House was extremely displeased at the position the King had taken. That permeated every aspect of Roger Harrison's tour in Jordan. I don't think it was a particularly happy tour for him and I think his relationship with the King and with the King's government as a result was very strained.

After the Gulf War U.S. navy ships began inspecting commercial carriers on their way to Aqaba, which is Jordan's only port. They would stop ships in the Gulf before they arrived in Aqaba and search them for what U.S. authorities were concerned were sanctioned goods being shipped through Aqaba to Iraq. This was a dangerous process because it took place day or night depending on what the intelligence indicated and depending on where the ships were. There were boarding parties. It was a difficult process physically to inspect cargo on ships on the high seas underway. The Gulf of Aqaba also gets very rough very quickly. It was a dangerous procedure and it was politically offensive to the Jordanians because they considered it an affront to their sovereignty. The practical impact from the Jordanian perspective was that not only were shippers of legitimate goods reluctant to ship by sea into Aqaba, but the cost of such shipping went up because the insurance companies demanded a premium for cargo bound for Aqaba. The combination of the position that the King took before the first Gulf War and the harsh feelings about Jordan as a result of that and the suspicion in Washington that Jordan was a sanctions violator and finally the fact that Jordan was still 100% dependent on Iraq for petroleum products gave Roger a very difficult assignment. It was a difficult atmosphere in which to have very productive relationships, so things were not good. The King was unhappy. Washington was unhappy. Everybody was unhappy.

Q: I understand in an interview with Roger that he was saying he kept getting sort of instructions to go and beat up on the King and much of this seemed to be, I mean the King was in a, we'll come to I think, you'll go through it again, was in a very difficult position because he couldn't take a pro-allied anti-Iraq posture at that point because it would have maybe destabilized the position of power. He said he had to try to deflect Washington he'd be told to beat up and he wouldn't beat up, that sort of thing. Were you sent there, when you went there, were we taking a new look at this? I mean we had you talked about being in the Madrid conference and all, did you have the feeling or were you told let's do some kissing and making up or not? What were you getting from Washington before you went out?

EGAN: Not exactly. Like most previous assignments, the substantive preparation for post, and I don't mean the sort of background reading that you do, but the specific policy guidance and instructions were pretty thin. There was a feeling both in the White House and in the State Department that this relationship was too important to just allow things to fester in this way; that the King had an important and influential potential role to play with respect to the peace process. As you said this was only three years after Madrid and during that three year period there had been all sorts of Jordanian-Palestinian and Jordanian-Israeli discussions not just on peace process issues, but more broadly between Jordanians and Israelis on the shape and nature of what a Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty might look like. The King I think felt politically that once the Palestinians had made their own move and once Yitzhak Rabin and Arafat had stood on the stage in the south lawn of the White House with President Clinton, after the famous handshake that everybody recalls, that the way was then open for the Jordanians to do the same thing. Although the issues were slightly different and the nature of the discussions were different, the end result was similar. Of course we wanted to encourage that.

I think there was also a feeling that there needed to be a broader regional approach to these issues and it was about this time that the first of the Middle East North African Economic Summits, the MENA summit process, took place in Casablanca in 1993 or 1994. It was an essentially political gathering, but it was a political gathering of the Arab states including the North Africans and the Israelis to look at the economic, trade, and development issues that faced the region. The principle behind these meetings was that by getting people together and focusing their attention on practical economic and development issues, that those conversations would lead to increased commercial relationships and those relationships would rub off on the political players. The idea of dealing with Israel would become more and more thinkable and more and more palatable. The King had an important role to play in the peace process narrowly defined with respect to the Israelis and Palestinians, but Jordan would potentially also be an important player in some larger regional economic security and development issues. For all of those reasons, although it was never really stated quite that way, it was very clear to me that I had some fixing up to try to do.

Q: Nobody was telling you to per se to go out and make nice or anything like that?

EGAN: No. The most pointed element of my instructions was actually framed in the negative and not in the positive. That was that we were concerned about sanctions violations through Jordan and were concerned about Jordan's continued reliance on Iraq as a supplier of fossil fuels and on Iraq as a market for Jordanian pharmaceutical, agricultural, and some light manufactured goods. There was an existing semi-barter arrangement between Jordan and Iraq and Iraq supplied Jordan's petroleum needs at a highly concessional price and the Jordanian liability for those fuel imports was met by exporting medicines and foodstuffs and other non-sanctioned manufactured goods. This was an arrangement that everybody knew about. The United Nations knew about it and we collectively understood the need for Jordan to do this. We wished they wouldn't politically, but economically we understood their need to do it and so we let it pass.

Q: Well, I would think medicines are pharmaceuticals.

EGAN: Those were non-sanctioned goods. It wasn't the export, it was the importation, it was the marketing of Iraqi oil because this was before oil for food. This was before '96 and before that program existed so the objection was that it was an export market for Iraqi petroleum products and of course those were sanctioned. I got to Amman, met the folks in the embassy, settled in, and presented my credentials very quickly. I think I presented them within a week of our arrival. I had a very nice short hand written note from President Clinton that he asked me to give to the King when I had my first long private session with him. That first long private discussion was in fact immediately after I presented my credentials. I expect Martin Indyk had suggested that the President do such a note which basically said that Egan was a good guy and you can deal with him.

Q: Had you met the President at all and get your picture taken?

EGAN: No. As I recall President Clinton didn't do that. I did have a meeting with Warren Christopher who was then Secretary of State, but that was relatively pro forma. The only time, the only president I met before going out like this was President Reagan who loved to have not just the ambassadors, but their families into the Oval Office for a chat and a cup of tea and a couple of photographs. I did that back in 1983 before going to Guinea-Bissau and he was fantastic. My parents were there and my wife and children and even my brothers. We were a crowd of seven or eight Egans and the President had all the time in the world. They each got their own photographs chatting or shaking the President's hand. It was quite a thrill.

Q: Talk about an Irish gathering or anything?

EGAN: A little bit, you know, that kind of silly sort of ethnic stuff. He just bowled everybody over because he was that sort of a personality. It chewed up maybe 15 or 20 minutes of his time which as presidential schedules go that's a long time. There was nothing substantive about it, but it was a thrill for me and a thrill for the family. I don't think anybody since Reagan has done that as routinely as he did. I also had before going to Guinea-Bissau, this is retrospective, but before going to Guinea-Bissau had asked to see the Vice President who was George Bush at the time and much to my surprise not only did he ask me to come over to his office in the Old Executive Office Building, but we spent about an hour and 15 minutes talking about, if you can believe it, Guinea-Bissau which could not have been terribly high on the list of things to do for the Vice President. He had smart questions and thoughtful comments. As I was getting ready to leave, he said, "Now, Wes, here's what I want you to do when you get there and keep me posted." I think he meant it. I don't know how many vice presidents have done that to 36 year old ambassador going to a very far away and small place, but I don't think that sort of thing happened after the second Reagan administration. I don't believe it happened as a routine matter at all with Clinton except for people going to the most important posts or people who were close political chums and friends.

Q: Who was the assistant secretary for Near Eastern affairs?

EGAN: Ed Djerejian was the Assistant Secretary when I went. Martin Indyk became the Assistant Secretary while I was there and as I recall, was the Assistant Secretary throughout my time in Amman, which was through about the end of July 1998, over four and a half years.

Q: What was your impression of the King and his attitude towards the situation when you arrived there because in a way you were ushering in a new era.

EGAN: He took advantage of that. In that first of many very private and in some cases very lengthy conversations between us, he said two things of particular importance. He said he didn't feel that he knew President Clinton. He was proud of the fact that, as he used to like to say he had strong personnel relationships with every U.S. President since Eisenhower, but that he didn't have one with Clinton. My response to that was that that was one of the things I was there to work on.

The second point he made to me was that he regretted that we had had a misunderstanding about the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. I said to him that I didn't think it was a misunderstanding. I thought it was a disagreement. I told him I would always rather deal with a disagreement because at least in the case of a disagreement, you can figure out what's wrong and what to do about it. A misunderstanding can linger for ages and sour all sorts of aspects of the relationship. I don't think we had a misunderstanding. I think we understood perfectly clearly, we just didn't agree with the position that the King had taken. So, we talked a good deal about that. Towards the end of that conversation, the King said he had thought that we and the Europeans had not recognized that there might still have been a way to negotiate the Iraqis out of Kuwait and to address some of the security concerns the Kuwaitis and the Saudis had with respect to Iraq's future intentions. He said he thought there were opportunities for discussions that were never pursued and that he regretted that. He said there had been domestic Jordanian issues that he had to consider, but that his greatest concern was that the coalition had not given Arab negotiations enough of a chance to succeed. We agreed that that was one of the unknowable issues, but we also agreed that we needed to find a way to put our bilateral relationship back together. It's one of the things that I think made my four and a half years in Jordan as satisfying as they were: both governments, however articulate or inarticulate they may have been at certain points, were interested in the same thing. That combined with the fact that things were sort of ripe for happening in the region with respect to Israelis, Jordanians and Palestinians and more broadly in the context of other bilateral tracks and perhaps most importantly from time to time the multilateral tracks that grew out of the Madrid conference. All sorts of people and groups who had not had much to do with each other before were sitting down to talk about issues that were important to them.

The positive inclination in the U.S. Jordanian relationship and the optimistic atmosphere in the region were very encouraging. It's hard to remember now, to look back a decade and realize or remember, how optimistic people were. From Madrid and from the 1993 Israeli Palestinian handshake in Washington things that had been inconceivable for years were now suddenly possible. Everybody felt it and wasn't just because of Yitzhak Rabin. Even though for King Hussein, Rabin was the Israeli leader with whom he had the easiest and most productive personal relationship. That was an important part of it, but it wasn't all of it. It was a sense that the parties to the conflict and the people outside the region who could make a difference in whether that conflict was resolved or not, principally the United States, were engaged, were serious, were ready to commit political and financial resources and wanted to get this damn thing resolved.

Q: In this initial talk with King Hussein, did he discuss Israel?

EGAN: Only in the sense that he and Rabin had an open channel, that they talked frequently, directly, that his younger brother the Crown Prince, Prince Hassan, was also involved in those discussions. And that his security officials and Israeli security officials had an open channel and dialogue. There was a man, Ali Shukri, who had been on the King's personal staff for years who had originally joined the palace staff as a communications specialist because King Hussein was an avid amateur radio ham.

Q: They talked to him from all over the world.

EGAN: All over. He'd send out CQ cards to people and he loved it. There was a very small building not much larger than the first floor of this ADST house that contained the King's radio room, not his official government communications office, but his own personal radio room and a private working office. Ali Shukri was the man the King used to maintain and to facilitate all sorts of back channels that he had, not just with the Israelis at various levels including the political, the military and the intelligence side of the Israeli government, but also, on occasion with me. If there was something that the King thought he needed to communicate to me that he for some reason didn't want it known that we had met face to face, his majesty would call me and ask me to stop by. Maybe 10% of the time the conversation was not with the King, but was with Ali. It worked very well. It was very effective. It bypassed a lot of bureaucratic stuff and was a useful channel. He had channels with the Israelis at many different levels and got a lot of business done in those channels. There were very few obstacles. If the King needed to, he simply picked up the telephone and asked Ali Shukri to put him through to Rabin.

Q: Just to put it in time perspective, at that point Jordan and Israel had not signed the peace treaty. No relationship technically.

EGAN: Well, there was a book written some years ago and published in this country by Columbia University Press by an Israeli historian named Avi Shlaim. Avi is now working on a biography of King Hussein. I've met with Avi Shlaim couple of times to talk about this biography project, it's an authorized biography. The title of his earlier book is Collusion Across the Jordan and it traces I think very accurately the nature of the quiet relationship between the Hashemites and various Israeli governments since the time of King Abdullah, Hussein's grandfather. It's a fairly rich and dense historical survey. Perhaps unique in the Arab world, Jordan has always had a way to deal with the Israeli authorities in whatever sector was required and they've had those channels for 60 years. You know, it's interesting in a demographic sense and in a communications and commercial sense, if you take the area west of the Jordan River, what is now Israel and the occupied West Bank, and you take the area east of the Jordan River which is now mostly Jordan, family linkages communications channels and commercial relationships in that area have always run east west and west east. In some cases, towns in the north of what is now Jordan have closer ties with towns in the northern West Bank than they do in the towns of the south of Jordan. This isn't just because the West Bank was Jordanian until 1967. It's that the demographics of the region are such and the Palestinian portion of the Jordanian population is such that most of those relationships are across the river rather than north south. So, you'll find a Jordanian in Irbid in the north whose got more ties to the west across the Jordan River than he may have with the capital in Amman and certainly than he may have with Jordanian cities in the south like Aqaba and Maan. The historical setting is such that given a desire to have those channels back and forth, it was not a particularly difficult thing to do and as I said I think you can trace it back to the very beginning of Transjordan under Abdullah when it was carved out of the old Palestine mandate. You couldn't say that about the Syrians or the Lebanese or the Egyptians or the Saudis or anybody else.

Q: I thought while we're there, why don't we do a little bit of talking about the relationship, you got there and you can allude to later on how it changed, but what about with Hassan and Syria at the time you got there?

EGAN: In the course of my time in Jordan one of our initiatives was to help demine parts of the Jordanian border. The Jordan Valley, because of the conflicts with the Israelis, and the Jordanian-Syrian border are heavily mined. The Syrian armed forces actually moved into Jordan in 1970 during Black September. Syrian President Assad, who was chief of staff of the air force at that time, did not play a direct role. It was a land invasion, but the Syrian-Jordanian border is heavily mined as a result. When the design of the demining program began we had to decide what areas we were going to work on first with the Jordanian armed forces. The obvious answer to that was the Jordan Valley, principally the area between Lake Tiberius and the Dead Sea. At one point I asked the army general in charge of the program about the north, along the Syrian border. He said they wanted to leave those mines in place. That reflects that traditional security anxiety the Hashemites had always felt towards the Syrians. The Syrians of course look at Jordan a little bit the same way the Spanish look at Portugal wondering why the other state even exists. To many Syrians, Jordan is all part of greater Syria, which is what it was as a province under the Ottomans. You will remember that after the war Ali's son Faisal, a Hashemite was placed on the throne in Damascus. The French objected and the Syrians objected. So, Faisal became the first king of Iraq. So, you had this Syrian antipathy towards the Hashemites as well.

Hamas and other Palestinian rejectionists, those who did not accept the existence of the state of Israel received whatever training and financing they required often on Syrian soil and then entered the West Bank through Jordan. They'd be smuggled across the border, the Syrian Jordanian border, make their way south and then cross into the West Bank either just north of the Dead Sea or between the Dead Sea and the Gulf of Aqaba. There was a flow of Palestinian rejectionists determined to commit acts of violence against Israelis in the West Bank. The Jordanians of course knew that if any of those operations were traced to somebody who had crossed into the West Bank from Jordan that the Israelis would retaliate against the Jordanians. There was a defensive rationale for the Jordanians to maintain as tight a control over the Syrian border as they could. If you went to visit the head of Jordanian intelligence in those days, one of their proudest exhibits was of things they had seized from people trying to get across the border from Syria into Jordan. Bazookas, automatic weapons, knives, explosives, all the hardware that a Palestinian militant, rejectionist or a terrorist would use. It was a relationship, for all of those reasons, based on suspicion.

In the four and a half years that I was in Amman, the King never went to Damascus and Assad never came to Jordan. They did talk occasionally by telephone or through intermediaries, but they didn't have much of a relationship. The King was intent on trying to keep the peace process focused on Israeli-Palestinian issues. I think we, the United States, made a mistake several times when we flirted with the idea of an Israeli-Syrian track first, thinking that if we could resolve the problem between Israelis and Syrians, including the status of the annexed Golan Heights, that that would give the rest of the process a big boost. Well, the King never saw it that way because to him that was a sideshow. That was not the real issue, but if you could resolve the Israeli-Palestinian issue, then he thought other things would probably fall into place. Of course he looked at his own actions as an example of that because it was only after Arafat and the PLO and the Israelis made the moves that they did in 1993 that King Hussein felt that he was then in a position to proceed toward a peace treaty himself with the Israelis.

If the Oslo agreements and the Israeli-Palestinian relationship in 1993 had not evolved as they did, you would not have had a Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty in 1994. There's no way any Arab front-line state leader was going to take that step before the Palestinians. When Assad died and his son the ophthalmologist became president, I think initially it was difficult for the Jordanians to take this young man seriously. He had been out of the country for years. He had none of the, he didn't appear to have any of his father's charisma or leadership characteristics. I think there was a feeling that the old guard in Damascus would coopt him very quickly and that there wasn't much likelihood that Syria's domestic or foreign policy would change very much. I think that has eased a bit since the King's death and Abdullah's ascension to the throne if for no other reason the fact that Abdullah and Bashir are of the same generation. Like the view towards Morocco where you have a new, young king, there is a feeling that these guys in their '30s and early '40s are in a position to cut through some of the problems their fathers and grandfathers could not. The Jordanian-Syrian relationship has traditionally been a very strained uneasy one, anxious and built on a record of suspicion between the two.

Q: How about the King and Arafat and the Palestinians at the time?

EGAN: Well, I don't think the King or his younger brother, who was then Crown Prince, Prince Hassan, I don't think any of them liked Arafat. They knew him as a thug, as a killer, as a man whose movement threatened the Hashemite throne directly in the 1970s when there were armed clashes between Jordanian armed forces and Fatah. It was from Jordan that the PLO moved to Beirut and then eventually to Tunis. They recognized Arafat as the leader of the Palestinian Liberation Organization and they recognized the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people, but they had no love for Arafat. They weren't going to spurn him or shun him or give any overt display of displeasure or opposition to him. He was a political fact of life and they dealt with him for that reason. There was no love lost among them. I think they thought he was a bumbler. I think King Hussein would have shared the view that many people now hold that Arafat had spent so much of his life as a PLO leader that it was almost impossible for him to really imagine a state in which his resistance was over and a state of an independent Palestine might take its place and live in some secure relationship side by side with the state of Israel. I think it was very difficult for him to imagine the transition from freedom fighter to the head of a state. Now, however ex officio or honorary that title may have eventually been, the apparatus of running an underground resistance movement and the apparatus of running a civil government are rather different.

Q: Yes.

EGAN: I think that deep inside the Jordanians were suspicious that he was not up to that challenge.

Q: Were there PLO representatives in Amman?

EGAN: Oh, sure. There was an "ambassador".

Q: What about the Saudi connection at that time?

EGAN: Well, you know, the Hashemites are all from Saudi Arabia. They're not Jordanians. I mean they're not from the region of Transjordan. They're foreigners in that sense and I was amazed at how often the Saudis would express to me what they claimed was their fear that King Hussein had designs on reestablishing Hashemite rule in Mecca and in the Hejaz in western Saudi Arabia. The Saudi ambassador and others said to me more than once that this was a real concern. They didn't like the King. In fact the King never had very many close friends among the heads of state and heads of government or monarchs in the region. It was as true of the Saudis as it was of the Egyptians. The Egyptians, I think, thought he wasn't serious, that he was troublesome, too independent minded, not rich. The Hashemites are not a wealthy family. I never felt that there were particularly close ties between his majesty and any of his counterparts in the region. Absolutely including the Saudi. Certainly including the Kuwaitis. Nobody could stand the Kuwaitis. Most people in the Arab world can't stand them. When the first Gulf War began and 7,000 or 8,000 Kuwaitis on holiday in Cairo had taken all of the presidential suites and the swankiest accommodations in the city, there were lots of Egyptians delighted to see Saddam Hussein give the Kuwaitis a bloody nose.

The most practical irritant I think in the Jordanian-Saudi relationship was the way the Saudis, and the Egyptians too, have always considered themselves the leaders of the Arab world. I think they resented any moves or posturing or event that put Hussein in a prominent and positive light with respect to Arab affairs. There were certainly Arab governments who criticized the King for his signing his own peace treaty with Israel, even the Egyptians. The Egyptian-Israeli treaty was signed 30 years ago, but they're totally different arrangements. If you read the text of the agreements that came out of Camp David and the agreement that became the Jordanian-Israeli Treaty of Peace, they are totally different documents and they tell you a lot about the fundamental nature of the relationship between those states.

Q: Well, while we're at it, could you explain what are the basic differences?

EGAN: If you look at the Camp David agreements, they are essentially a cessation of hostilities, a cease-fire and a schedule of withdrawal, military withdrawal from the Sinai. It's a tremendously important, but a fairly narrow set of agreements. Their implementation required the creation of a multinational force, the MFO based on the Mediterranean coast of the Sinai Peninsula led principally by us, but I think with 15 or 20 other nationalities participating to monitor the cease-fire in place and the schedule of withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Sinai. The MFO still exists. It was in my view a fairly narrow set of agreements focused principally on the disengagement forces. If you look at the Jordanian-Israeli treaty, its focus is how they're going to cooperate with respect to water, security, communications, cultural and artistic exchanges, trade, border demarcation, landmine removal, intelligence exchanges. It's all about how they're going to do things together. It reflects the fact that at war or at peace the Jordanian-Israeli relationship is a much more complicated, intertwined set of relationships. If it works, then it sets the stage for a very warm and productive bilateral relationship. If it doesn't work it sets the stage for a lot of frustration on the part of people who had hoped that the signing of that treaty would change their lives in some important ways.

The Egyptian-Israeli treaty doesn't inspire much and whether Egyptian-Israeli relations are up as they seem to be a little bit now or whether they're down as they have been recently, doesn't depend very much on the nature of those Camp David agreements. Whereas in the Jordanian case, the warmth or the lack of warmth, cold peace versus warm peace as journalists like to say, depends a lot more on people's expectations given what was a very broad set of agreements on a large range of issues that affected a lot of people's lives very directly.

Q: Then the last one, Iraq at this time, the relationship there.

EGAN: I think King Hussein was willing to give Saddam Hussein more of a benefit of the doubt and for longer than almost anybody on the region. Large sectors of the Jordanian economy had been expanded and developed to supply the Iraqi market. This was particularly true in pharmaceuticals. There is a huge Jordanian pharmaceutical industry and that industry lived and died on its ability to export to Iraq. And as I said before, Jordan was totally dependent on Iraqi oil. There is also the sort of fuzzy, very subjective fact that there was of course a Hashemite on the throne in Baghdad until the royal family was liquidated in the 1950s. The man who is to this day the grand chamberlain of the royal court, Prince Ra'ad, was I believe the only member of the Hashemite royal family in Baghdad to survive the coup. He was in Europe at school. There are familial feelings about Iraq, not in the sense that the Hashemites would ever return to the throne in Baghdad, but simply based on the fact that they once were on the throne in Baghdad. Third, the size of the, the percentage of the Jordanian population that is of Palestinian origin as opposed to East Bank origin is probably 60% or more and the PLO and the Palestinian movement in general had been beneficiaries of Iraqi largesse for years. Finally a large part of the Jordanian intellectual and artistic elite is in fact Iraqi. And you remember one of the immediate results for Jordan of the first Gulf War was this huge flow of Palestinian refugees out of Iraq and Kuwait into Jordan. It's a relationship with a complicated history. Prior to the Gulf War, Jordan's relationship with Iraq was much closer and more intimate than Jordan's relationship with any of her other neighbors. They did military training exchanges; their economies were linked; fuel supplies were a dominant factor; the export market was a dominant factor and there were many Jordanian citizens of Palestinian origin who felt that Iraq was an important patron for their resistance movement.

Q: Well, during the time you were ambassador.

EGAN: Let me just finish that because the essence of your question, did this change and what was it that changed? Yes it did and the change in the King's mind I believe took place when Saddam Hussein's son-in-law defected.

Q: Two sons-in-law, wasn't it?

EGAN: Two in I want to say '95, late I think it was '95. Hussein Kamal defected on the grounds of the royal palace in Amman. That's where he held his first press conference and he and his entourage and wives were all put up in the royal guesthouse. We and the Jordanians began a period of intense intelligence debriefings of Hussein Kamal. I remember when he first defected within a matter of days the then deputy director of operations at the agency and a team and flew to Amman, stayed with us in the residence and we had several meetings with the Jordanians to talk about how we were going to exploit this defection. Things that came out of that with respect to what Saddam Hussein's assets were, what his weapons program had been and might be in the future, and what his domestic rule really was like with respect to Kurds and other minorities and the brutality of the regime, I think really struck the King. It wasn't too long after that defection that King Hussein said to me privately, he had been mistaken with respect to Saddam, his regime, and the threat he posed. It was from that point on that Jordan began to play a much more important role with us in support of not only maintaining sanctions, but also flying southern watch missions in southern Iraq which we had previously based out of Saudi Arabia and the Gulf. We actually had a squadron of F15s and F16s in Jordan flying into Iraq almost every day.

Q: I didn't realize that.

EGAN: Very few people do. Flying southern watch missions into southern Iraq. Probably couldn't have managed that with the Jordanians before Hussein Kamal's defection. The number and the size of our joint military training operations in Jordan increased substantially. The number of port visits increased substantially. Our intelligence exchange, which had always been very robust, got even stronger. So strong and so close that by the time I left in 1998 if you had asked me with whom in the world we had the closest intelligence sharing relationship, I would have said first the United Kingdom and second Jordan. Closer, more productive intelligence cooperation than I have ever seen, than I had ever seen anywhere. I think the turning point in the King's mind was the picture that Hussein Kamal painted of the Saddam Hussein regime. If King Hussein had ever any doubt as to the nature of the Iraqi regime, those doubts were dispelled listening to Hussein Kamal. Now, of course the irony is that some of the stuff that we got from him was rubbish.

Q: Particularly the weapons of mass destruction and that sort of thing.

EGAN: Oh, yes, chemical weapons programs and all the rest of it.

Q: I would think, you know, people defect in countries that claim to be neutral or neutral and they usually say, okay, you can stay here, but you have to take a low profile and don't mess around with other intelligence.

EGAN: His defection was not low profile.

Q: But I mean in a way it was an act, a very positive act by opening up this defector to our intelligence operation.

EGAN: Yes, but of course that cooperation was possible against the background of what had always been a very robust bilateral Intel relationship with the Jordanians. I mean going back years. King Hussein called me one night, and it was quite late, and I went down to the palace to see him and he handed me a cassette tape. He said it was a tape of a conversation between two heads of state in the region which he found very disturbing. I took it back to the embassy to transcribe and translate it. Three things surprised us: that this conversation had actually taken place, that the Jordanians had the technology to pull the conversation out of the air, and that the King would give it to me. That the relationship was so close and so trusting that they could do that. In a particular area that incident also led to even greater exploitation of certain technical assets that we had in the region that made an important contribution to our understanding of certain things that were going on at the time. My point is this took place before Hussein Kamal's defection. So, that defection did not create an intimate intelligence relationship, but it allowed some aspects of it to develop in directions and to a degree that not only might not have been possible before, but might not even have occurred to the two sides as something worthy of exploitation.

Q: This is tape eight, side one with Wes Egan. Yes?

EGAN: I need to back up a second because there are a couple of things that I've left out. After the first couple of private conversations I had with the King, one afternoon he called me and the British and the French ambassadors to his working office. He was there with his prime minister, Abdel Salaam Majali, who had been the leader of the Jordanian peace team negotiating with the Israelis. He said our interdiction of commercial vessels bound for Aqaba by the U.S. navy with British and French support had to stop. He said it was intolerable and that he couldn't allow it to continue. It was an ultimatum. He told the three of us we had to figure out a different way to do this. His ultimatum produced what became the onshore sanctions inspection regime in Aqaba conducted by a British firm whereby ships would not be bothered while at sea, but 100% of everything that was offloaded in Aqaba was open to fairly easy inspection. It took the sting out of this affront to Jordanian sovereignty. It also, from a practical perspective, actually increased the volume of goods that could be inspected because it was done on the docks rather than on the high seas. I had argued at the time that if we were going to bring the inspections regime ashore, the place to do it was not so much Aqaba, the place to do it was on the Iraqi-Jordanian border because to try to figure out what really was on its way to the Jordanian market and what was going to be exported as a sanctions violation is sometimes a very difficult call and the process of implementing that inspections regime although it went fairly smoothly was always a potential irritant in the nature of our bilateral relationship. This was early spring of 1994. Again, one of the factors that I think motivated the King's thinking was the concern that so much of his domestic economy depended on trade with the Iraqis that it made the sovereignty issue even more of an issue for him.

I thought the object was to devise a system that allowed those inspections to take place in a way that was as minimally offensive and as practically effective as possible. I think eventually we got pretty close to that and it ceased to be much of an issue.

Q: Did the oil for food regime out of the UN with Iraq did that develop while you were there?

EGAN: It did in the last couple of years and from the Jordanian perspective, it was potentially a great opportunity. But the process by which contracts were approved in New York under that program was so slow that it created another whole world of Jordanian complaints. I would be called in and told that the Jordanian contract for Q-tips, for example, had been sitting for 11 months in committee. Why are you blocking this? The nature of the arguments that we had about whether particular contracts would be approved in the sanctions committee or not may have outweighed, in the final analysis, the benefit the Jordanians got from participating in the program. The biggest benefit they got was that their petroleum needs were supplied and there was some counter trade. The strongest argument we could have made with the Jordanians to wean them off Iraqi petroleum exports would have been if somebody in the region, like the Saudis, would have been willing to offer petroleum to the Jordanians at a concessional price, close to what they were getting from the Iraqis.

There's the pipeline that runs from Saudi Arabia through Jordan into Syria which was full but the Saudis were simply unwilling to consider supplying Jordan's needs on a concessional basis. We never really pressed the Saudis very vigorously on this.

Q: Well, you've got the tap line.

EGAN: Yes, tap into the tap line, but over three or four years that never got anywhere.

Q: Wes, that brings up a question. What about your relationship if any with our ambassador in Riyadh, our ambassador in Tel Aviv and our ambassador in Damascus and maybe Lebanon, too? I mean was there, were you able to talk to our guy in Riyadh and say, hey, how about this tap line deal?

EGAN: I didn't do it. I didn't deal with Riyadh, but I did have that relationship with my counterpart in Damascus, Chris Ross. Chris used to come to Amman occasionally and stay with us and chew on issues that we had different perspectives on or a common interest in pursuing. I had an equally good relationship with the ambassador in Tel Aviv, the consul general in Jerusalem, and the ambassador in Cairo who for most of that time was Ned Walker. We didn't do it so much by phone and e-mails were still a rarity in those days. I did not even have e-mail in my office in Amman, but we went back and forth very freely in cable traffic in official-informals and we also saw each other periodically. Those relationships were very close. We were a pretty tight group and I think worked very well together in those days.

Q: How about with the Near Eastern bureau?

EGAN: Ed Djerejian was the Assistant Secretary. Ed was somebody I had known for a long time and that relationship was very easy. When he left, you remember Ed went to Tel Aviv, I think within about a year of my arrival in Amman, a move that kind of surprised everybody, and he didn't stay long. I don't think he stayed 12 months in Tel Aviv. He took a job as the director of the Jim Baker center at Rice, which is where he's been ever since. Ed was a good friend and the tooing and froing with him on these issues was a very easy and natural one.

Warren Christopher was the Secretary of State when I started and he was a regular visitor to Jordan. I liked Warren Christopher. I thought he had a modesty about him that is not common in American secretaries of state. He had a proper and good relationship with the King and with other members of the royal family and when necessary the Jordan government officials as well. His visits were always productive and useful. What I used to like about him was that if he didn't understand something, he asked. King Hussein had a large estate in Surrey. The King was there at one point and Warren Christopher was going to be in London and it was, there was a reason, I can't remember what it was at the time, but there was a reason that the Secretary needed to see the King. I went to London for those meetings and in a dinner conversation with Secretary Christopher the evening before the meeting, and with Bob Pelletreau too, who by that time was Assistant Secretary, Warren Christopher asked why the Jordanian Royal Family were called Hashemites? I can imagine a lot of secretaries of state not knowing why they're called Hashemites, but I can't imagine many of them being so straightforward and honest to say, I just don't understand this, what does that name mean? We explained it to him and I respected that in him. He was a very easy man to deal with and as I said he had a sense of personal modesty that I always appreciated and it worked very well with King Hussein because King Hussein was not an arrogant man. He was extraordinarily gracious, almost to a fault.

Q: Somebody, I can't remember who dealt with him, said he always would call him sir.

EGAN: Absolutely.

Q: And would say, do you mind if I smoke?

EGAN: Absolutely. He said that to me. We were sitting in his office one afternoon and said to me, "Sir, do you mind if I smoke?" I said, "Your majesty, this is your country. I think you can do pretty much as you like."

It's a lot easier to deal with a monarch who is really in charge than with a messy democratically elected government that's got an obstreperous legislative branch and government views of its own. When we really needed something important done in Jordan, or with Jordan, it was often simply a matter of my sitting down with him and explaining our need. That's not to suggest that he always agreed, but when he did, it happened like that and when he didn't agree there was no way around him. There was no other point of power or influence in that system that you could leverage to get the King to change his mind. It either worked with him or it didn't. But it was a very efficient process. I would get an instruction from Washington on whether the Jordanians would agree to this or that and I would often be back to them in 24 hours with a cable that said I spoke with the King last night and here's what we can do or here's what we're not going to be able to do and here's what I think about how we should proceed. It was a lot more efficient than dealing with a lot of other officials. He was always an extremely articulate, civilized, gracious, and modest man to deal with in that way.

On the other hand, his accessibility sometimes meant that Washington officials took him for granted. But even with those people, he was always very solicitous, gracious, and accessible. Sometimes I think accessible to a fault. I'm not sure every visiting official should assume that he or she will be received by the head of state. There was often a presumption that almost any official out of Washington could ask for and get time with the King. I think he was often too polite to say no, although he did occasionally, but generally he was too polite to say no. I also think it was very calculating on his part because I'm sure that he sensed that American officials who had time with him expanded his influence or his impact on the diverse and decentralized nature of our own government. Some official from the Department of Commerce could meet with the King and when the Jordanian ambassador in Washington then needed something from that Commerce official, the door opened a little more easily. Occasionally there were people in State and at the White House who grew patronizing about the King. I did not find it so much in CIA or DOD.

Q: Did you in your embassy have any problem with as has happened in a good number of our embassies where the CIA has a very close relationship with the intelligence apparatus of another place. You see what I'm getting at? I mean sometimes the relationship almost bypasses the ambassador; well, there's a problem there.

EGAN: No, I did not. There was a period not just in Jordan but throughout the region in which our own intelligence services put money in the pockets of several monarchs. They were rented and in some cases the amount of money that flowed was not insignificant. Those days are by and large gone. The bribery aspect of the relationship was no longer a factor. I had always also made it a point to make sure it was understood both by station personnel and by non-station personnel that the intelligence staff was a fully integrated and important part of the embassy. It was not some separate operation anymore than the defense attaché's office was a separate operation or the AID mission was a separate operation. These agency heads were fully integrated members of the country team and they all worked for me. That was not difficult in Jordan, in part because of the nature of my own relationship with the King, other members of the royal family, including the Crown Prince, and government ministers from the prime minister down. One of the advantages of having developed a good relationship with King Hussein was that his ministers knew what access I had and knew how the King felt about his relationship with me and what role I played in the bilateral relationship. So, there was never an issue of somebody else in the embassy being able to deliver on something that the ambassador couldn't. I will give you a couple of examples.

The Crown Prince at one point decided that he wanted to get a special briefing from us on a weekly basis, an intelligence briefing from us on developments in Iran. He raised this desire with me and I said, sure. The COS and I reported this request to Washington and said we wanted to be responsive. The first two or three times the briefing was done I attended. I didn't say anything. I sat while the COS briefed the Crown Prince. After I'd done that two or three times, I no longer went. The point I was trying to make to the Crown Prince was you're getting this briefing because I think its useful and important to do. With respect to the armed forces chief of staff and with respect to the director of Jordanian intelligence, particularly with respect to the latter, I made a point of developing a very close personal and operational relationship with them too.

When the DCI came to visit and wanted to see the head of Jordanian intelligence, it was the American ambassador that took him. It was the American ambassador who knew the GID director's family and the circumstances of his life. The important thing to do when you manage a relationship like that is to make sure that your presence is never an obstacle to getting the business done. I tried to make sure that was never the case. I led those relationships not because I was sitting there in my office saying, by God I'm the ambassador and these things don't go on without me. I was able to do it because the Jordanians knew that if they needed something, that their chance of getting it was far greater when I was the one they approached. My presence was, in their mind, to their advantage.

It's not unlike a point I made about what makes an effective DCM. That DCM is going to be useful in playing the DCM role if the other senior staff see him or her as an asset and not as an obstacle or liability. One of the odd results of this was that I would sometimes be asked by a Jordanian official if I could help them persuade the King of something. At one point, I ran the risk of getting sucked into the relationship between King Hussein and his younger brother, Crown Prince Hassan. Hassan asked me to intervene on something with the King for him. I said "no."

Q: All right. Well, I think we're going to stop at this point. A couple of things I wanted to mention and you'll have other things, too. Did water come up as a problem that you got involved in, water rights? I mean, you know the Jordan River and all that. So, I'll ask about that.

EGAN: This is next time?

Q: Next time. Rabin, were you there during the assassination of Rabin? All right. You talked about the Crown Prince and how did you see him, what roles he was playing and also other political currents that were going through there, the queen and her role.

EGAN: It's important we talk about that point.

Q: Obviously the peace treaty when we get there and I'm sure there are other things you might think about and make note of.

EGAN: Let's make sure we touch on all of those the next time.

Q: Okay. Also, military equipment. Were there any developments there?

EGAN: There's military equipment, there's debt forgiveness, President Clinton was the first president of the United States ever to speak to an Arab legislative body and he did that in Amman. There were lots of those.

Q: How about Madeleine Albright? You've talked about Warren Christopher and how you saw Madeleine Albright and her, and also as there developed in the or seemed to develop in the Clinton administration an increasingly focused group on Israel and a sense at least I saw it as sort of a sense of isolation of you might say the Arab side of things. I may be wrong on this, but it seemed to have an Israeli bias there.

EGAN: Maybe we're going to need two more sessions.

Q: I mean this is fine. Look, this is extremely important.

EGAN: Is this interesting?

Q: Oh, very interesting. So, we'll talk about all that.

Q: Today is the New Year. It's January 3rd, 2005. Wes, I had mentioned a few minor little things there, so if you want to, you said you'd like to continue on talking about the Crown Prince and the relationship at that time.

EGAN: Just to wrap that part of it up. King Hussein had two brothers. His younger brother was Prince Hassan and he had been the Crown Prince when I was there. He'd been the Crown Prince for 34 or 35 years. The King also had an older brother, Prince Mohammed, who unfortunately suffered from the same emotional instability that the King's father, Talal had suffered from and it had made his father unfit to govern and that's why Hussein became king as such a young man. Prince Mohammed was I think the president of the Jordanian chess club, but was not otherwise particularly involved in affairs of Jordan. Crown Prince Hassan of course was. He was an extremely well educated man, very thoughtful, widely read, very literate, fluent in several languages including Hebrew. At the signing of the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty in 1994 he made several of his remarks in Hebrew at the podium. He stayed in quite close touch with the Israeli intellectual elite and spoke widely in Europe and was a regular attendant at gatherings like the World Economic Forum. He used to speak at Oxford and at St. Paul's and was very active in interfaith dialogue on an international basis. He was probably the only member of the Hashemite family who I would call a real intellectual, and he prided himself in that. I think it's probably hard for any of us to imagine how difficult it must have been to be the younger brother of an iconic figure like King Hussein. It's just a huge; it's a large and deep shadow to live in. Hassan's role was complicated by the fact that he'd been made Crown Prince so early and he was in that position for so long and yet under the Jordanian system, under that constitutional monarchy, except when he was regent when the King was out of the country, he has no real executive authority. He couldn't actually give instructions to ministers or to officials of government or to officials of parliament. He could make his views plain to them and he certainly had a following and there were people who if they had a call to see Hassan or a discussion with Hassan about one thing or another would follow up on it almost would follow up on it as a wish expressed by the palace as they used to say, but it didn't really have any institutional weight in the system.

The tragedy of that I always thought was that he therefore never had very many opportunities to demonstrate to the people of Jordan what kind of a monarch he would be when he succeeded the King and that worked to his disadvantage. People didn't feel they really knew or trusted him with those authorities and he never had the opportunity to learn from the exercise of royal authority for more than brief periods as long as his older brother was alive. His life was also complicated somewhat by the fact that he was married to a woman who was extremely well educated and intellectual in her own right and a very strong personality. And there were many people in Jordan who were not terribly fond of Princess Sarvath. She was the daughter of a very senior Pakistani diplomat. She was also Oxford educated and she just rubbed a lot of people the wrong way. I think there were serious questions as to what kind of a queen she would make.

When the King was near death in January and February of 1999, his decision to make his son Abdullah, his oldest son by Princess Muna, king, his successor rather than the Crown Prince, there was a lot of head scratching outside of Jordan. But I think in Jordan itself, a lot of people were relieved. It's unfair and unfortunate for Hassan because he's such a decent guy, but his relationship with his older brother was up and down. I think relationships between or among brothers are the most difficult blood relationships for people outside the relationship to understand. I think King Hussein had some longstanding concerns about what sort of monarch Hassan would be. I think when he was back in the States getting medical treatment at the Mayo Clinic, he was hearing things from Jordan about how his younger brother was comporting himself as Crown Prince that bothered him. That's not to suggest that everything that he heard was correct or true because Hassan certainly had his detractors, but his decision to pass over his younger brother in favor of his oldest son was an enormous political and family decision for him to take. I believe that one of the contributing factors also was that Hussein wanted his oldest son by Queen Noor, I wouldn't say wanted him to be king, but I think that son was a real favorite. As I watched that young boy grow up, when I first got to Jordan he was only 14 and when I left he was almost 19, those are formative years for a young man, and I think I mentioned earlier that the King routinely brought him to Washington for meetings with the President and DCI and the Secretary of Defense and the rest of it. So, he was clearly showing this young boy how you do it at that level. I think he wanted from Hassan some sort of assurance that his oldest boy by Noor would be Hassan's successor, would be Crown Prince and be Hassan's successor rather than Hassan's own son. I suspect that he did not get the level of assurance that he felt he needed before his death for the transition to Hassan to take place and it was one of many reasons, but one of the important reasons, why he turned to Abdullah who is now King Abdullah II. Nobody could have been more surprised at that turn of events than Abdullah himself. He had never expected to be king. He, I think, saw his future as a military officer. When I got to Jordan he was the head of Special Forces. He then became the King's military chief of staff, not chief of staff, but advisor, but he fully expected his life to be spent in uniform in the service of the Hashemite kingdom and the people of Jordan. He was astounded when this all happened. I think he's probably, of all of the potential successors to King Hussein who were of age, he is the man who will follow best in his father's footsteps. I think the record since 1999 has borne that out.

Imagine how hard it must have been to be the Crown Prince of 35 years, imagine how equally difficult it must have been to be King Hussein's successor. Like his father, Abdullah has sustained a very close relationship with the United States. In fact I suspect there are some in Jordan who feel his relationship with the United States is too close. I think the Crown Prince's dismissal about a month and a half ago, was related to the fact that some in Jordan felt that Abdullah had been too supportive of the United States in Iraq and was too close to us politically. It was one of those very delicate nests of relationships to manage.

Obviously another important person in all of that was Queen Noor. I don't really know how most of my predecessors handled the relationship with her. I know that one or two of them had a difficult relationship with her. I don't particularly know why. She went through a period when she was not particularly popular in Jordan, when she and the King were first married. That was not so much a criticism of her or of a reflection of her as it was that her predecessor, Queen Alia, a Palestinian had been such an enormous favorite. I think that passed and certainly in the period that I was there you did not hear people speak poorly of the queen. She had foundations and activities and initiatives particularly related to the role of women in development, and human rights. She was a very talented, is a very talented woman. She was one of the first women to take a degree in architecture at Princeton.

My wife and I called on her shortly after we arrived. It was a perfectly normal, very pleasant conversation over tea for an hour or so. She could not have been any nicer, but for a variety of reasons it was clear to me that she didn't feel any particular need to have a relationship with the American ambassador. She had a reputation of being suspicious of the way in which the United States conducted itself overseas particularly in the Middle East and particularly in respect to the intelligence side of the operation. She was always quick to be anxious about or suspicious about what may or may not have been going on in the intelligence channel. Part of that I think was the result of the period in which she grew up in the '60s and '70s. So there seemed to be an inclination to maintain a bit of an arm's distance with the American ambassador. For my part, of course I was not there to have a relationship with Queen Noor. I was there to have a relationship with her husband, which is what I focused on. We saw each other often, particularly at palace events, and I sometimes sat next to her at concerts and fund raisers. It was a perfectly normal relationship, perfectly civilized. She was always very nice both to me and my wife and we called on her before we left and it was a very pleasant and personal farewell after four and half years. We have stayed in touch with her on occasion since then. There was no reason for U.S. representation in Jordan to be managed or for any part of it to be managed with any particular eye toward her and her role. I think that was very likely true of my predecessors as well. She was certainly an important personality and she was the love of King Hussein's life at that time of his life and she played that role I think very effectively. She was certainly a very special representative for Jordan in Europe and the United States and is still active on lots of causes that today were important to her then.

Q: Did you see the Crown Prince the time you were there as someone to impart messages or to keep informed or how did we deal with the Crown Prince?

EGAN: Well, the Crown Prince when I was there was the heir to the throne. I mean the plan was and it was that when the time came, either at the time of King Hussein's death or the time of his incapacitation, that Crown Prince Hassan would become king. I was clearly interested in having a personal and professional relationship with him that kept him not just well informed, but kept him understanding of what we were up to in the bilateral relationship and on important regional issues, peace process principally. It's the same way, in a way, it's the same way anybody would be smart to deal with a strong deputy who had a confirmed future as the principal to do what was both necessary and natural to cultivate and sustain that relationship so that when the time came for him to become king, that in and of itself, did not produce some sort of hiccup or misunderstanding in the relationship. Now, King Hussein himself used his brother in lots of discrete and important ways. Several of the channels with the Israelis ran through the Crown Prince. There were a few relationships with the Arab intellectual community in the region and scattered globally particularly in Europe, which he managed for the King. He was often in meetings that the King was almost always in and at least one of the meetings that the King had had with visiting American dignitaries, not necessarily all of them, but at least one of them and there were occasions in which those visitors would also be a useful reason for the visitor to call on the Crown Prince himself, not all the time, but occasionally. We tried to stay sensitive to that. Of course he was not only his brother's brother, but he was also heir apparent and had a conversation with his brother on just about every subject you could possibly imagine that affected Jordanian internal or external politics, policies and relations. He was very much a part of that mix. He was rarely a decision maker. The King didn't go to the Crown Prince for decisions. I would sometimes go to the Crown Prince after I had a long conversation with the King about something and brief him on it. I think I mentioned at one point he asked if he could have a regular intelligence briefing from us on Iran and we did that. Of course he had his own contacts with influential Iranians and being part of the sort of international interfaith movement, there were lots of opportunities for contact. There was even a period in 1994 prior to the signing of the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty, when we were trying to find a mechanism that could focus on some of the developmental and economic issues that were going to be important to the normalization of relations among Israelis, Palestinians and Jordanians. We formed an interagency group that Hassan was part of representing the King on those issues related to economic and regional economic cooperation and development issues that affected the West Bank and Israel and Jordan. He was thoughtful and active on that. As I say, he maintained extensive ties with both Israeli and Palestinian elites, but I would say probably more on the Israeli side than on the Palestinian side.

Q: Now, let's turn to water during the time you were there, what about water?

EGAN: Water is the single greatest impediment to economic growth and development in Jordan and probably the second most sensitive point of contention between Jordanians and Israelis. I say second because I think cross border terrorism and the desire of Palestinian rejectionist elements to come into the West Bank and into Israel from Jordan were of paramount concern. Jordan has one of the lowest water consumption rates per capita of any country in the world. The single largest component of our non-military assistance program was in the water sector. The Jordanian problem is limited supply and a very creaky and leaky system for distribution. Jordan regularly went through a period of two or three months every year in which the city water system was simply shut down. There was no water for apartment houses and offices and residences. There was a thriving market in water that was trucked into the city from small springs. Every house and apartment building had a large galvanized tank on the roof for water storage. We used to estimate that if you put a cubic meter of water into the supply pipe you got less than half of that out the other end because the system leaked and because there were so many illegal taps into it.

Water was also and had been for years a major issue in Jordan's relationship with the Syrians, the West Bank and the Israelis. The Jordan River is a trickle by the time it actually gets to the Dead Sea. I don't think a bird could get its knees wet in it there's so little. Much of it is pulled out of the river for irrigation. There are to this day discussions that occur occasionally between Jordanians and Israelis on how best to manage the water resources of the Yarmouk River which comes down and separates the Golan Heights from northern Jordan. There is an enormous aquifer that lies under the Negev and Wadi Aqaba and the Jordan valley. There are several dozen Israeli farms on the Israeli side whose wells come in to Jordan underground at an angle. There is a constant argument about how rapidly you can lift the water out of that aquifer because if you lift it too fast, the saline water below will contaminate the fresh water aquifer.

The Jordanians have gone to such extremes that they are lifting fossil water out of large prehistoric deposits in Wadi Rum that are not replenished. When its gone its going to be gone. The lack of water is an enormous restraint on Jordanian economic development and it is a politically and strategically sensitive resource issue in Jordan's relationships with the entire region.

Q: Were there any major disputes when you were there?

EGAN: Constant disputes that the Israelis were lifting too much; that the tapping into the aquifer across the Jordanian border was not consistent with the treaty; that the Syrians were talking about building a dam in the upper Yarmouk that was going to reduce the flow into the area where Jordan had extraction rights; that the agricultural development on the West Bank and Israeli side of the Jordan River was too intense and was overusing the source, etc. The Jordanians were almost constantly on the defensive and they would discover things going on that they would often come to us to help resolve. When we felt we could play a constructive role in those issues we did. The problem of the encroachment of Israeli farms across the border in Jordan was an issue that they involved us in quite directly when negotiating the 1994 treaty. The final result was that the Jordanians and the Israelis came up with a device whereby Israel was allowed to lease from Jordan those portions of the farms that had encroached onto the Jordanian side. It was as I recall a no cost lease for 25 years. That allowed the border to be officially demarcated for the first time since the Palestinian Mandate. It allowed Israeli agricultural activity in that part of the desert to continue unabated and it maintained the semblance of Jordanian sovereignty over the acreage actually involved. It will be interesting to see what happens after 25 years when those leases expire, but it certainly solved the problem at the time.

Q: Was there any other attempt to have a neighboring truck farm run by Jordanians or next to the Israeli one?

EGAN: No. Jordanian agricultural activity was concentrated in the Jordan River Valley except for a little activity at the southern tip of the Dead Sea. It was not only produce, but it extended to fish farms and processing.

Q: Well, moving down, what was your view of experiences with the Jordanian Israeli peace treaty, which was signed when by the way?

EGAN: Signed in the fall of 1994. The issues that needed to be addressed in a Jordanian-Israeli agreement had been known for a long time and there had been on again, off again discussions between Jordanians and Israelis about how those issues might be resolved for many years. But they were, they could never go very far prior to the PLO decision at Oslo to begin the Oslo process. As soon as Arafat made that decision, as incomplete and as tentative as it may now look in retrospect, as soon as it was "legitimate" to have such negotiations with the Israelis, the wraps were off the Jordanians. The King said to me more than once that the Oslo agreement opened the door for Jordan. The White House ceremony was in September of 1993, the famous handshake between Rabin and Yasser Arafat, very soon after that Jordan-Israeli working groups began to meet to discuss the components of a treaty and how the issues involved in that agreement needed to be handled. Many of those discussions took place in Washington.

We kept an eye on all of those discussions and negotiations, but the Israelis and Jordanians were no strangers to each other. They were eager to get this done. They wanted our help when they felt they needed it, but not otherwise, and they did quite an extraordinary job of coming to terms with all those issues by the fall of 1994.

There had been discussions in London between Jordanians and Israelis almost immediately after Oslo was agreed that we did not know about until after the fact which is fine. Majali was the prime minister of Jordan at the time and he was the leader of the Jordanian delegation in those negotiations. Someday he'll publish his book on those negotiations. It was never a case of our trying to crack the whip over two reluctant parties. They were ready. The objection to the treaty at the time was that it was a treaty the King had decided on negotiating and finalizing and that it was not a treaty between the people of Jordan and the people of the state of Israel, it was a treaty between the Israelis in the form of Yitzhak Rabin and the Jordanians in the form of the King. The Crown Prince was very involved in many of these negotiations. There was enormous optimism that the Palestinian-Israeli track, the other bilateral tracks that had been launched at Madrid in 1991, and the multilateral track that was designed to address water, security, economic development and not just the Jordanians, Israelis and Palestinians, but including the Syrians, the Lebanese, and the Egyptians, all those things were in play and I think there was, I know that there was a feeling in the region and it was very strongly felt in Jordan that this could actually work, that for the first time the Israeli-Palestinian conflict looked as though it could be resolved. It looked as though its resolution was an extremely high priority for the United States and the Europeans, but mostly the United States; that we were actively and aggressively involved; that we would do everything we possibly could to make it happen and to support it after it happened. Even though there were skeptics, the underlying sense was one of optimism. As we got closer to the end of President Clinton's second term, some of the air was beginning to leak out of the balloon. Up until 1997 there was great confidence that this could work and things were changing. You had the creation of qualifying industrial zones in Jordan, the first of which was up north in Irbid and this was an essentially bonded manufacturing site that involved Jordanian and Israeli labor and capital. Manufacturing took place in Jordan. There were some 5,000 Jordanians employed when it first began and the products were mostly jewelry and lingerie for Victoria's Secret. It used to be incredible to go up there and see these very proper Muslim women stitching together scanty lingerie for Victoria's Secret.

Q: My understanding is that most Arab women of any pretension whatsoever will probably have those underneath anyway.

EGAN: I'd let that be your understanding, but as long as the final product contained a certain percentage of non-Jordanian input, in this case Israeli input it entered the United States duty free. There is now one in Zarqa just outside of Amman and one in Aqaba. It produces employment. It contributes to trade. It's good for Jordanians.

Q: The fostering of this in order to improve the economy of Jordan.

EGAN: We encouraged it because of a belief that the economies and therefore the development of Jordan, Israel and the West Bank were bound up with each other. There were some who talked about the region almost in the same way you would talk about the Benelux states. Israel relies on Palestinian labor. Jordan relies on regional trade patterns and Palestinian markets. Jordan is also in competition with the Palestinians in cement. Jordan can produce cement for the Israeli market cheaper than Palestinians can. Many of these things never came to fruition. Part of it was related to security concerns with the transport of goods particularly bulk goods across the border. Part of it was related to a heavily protectionist instinct on the Israeli side and part of it was related to a Palestinian authority that did not want to relinquish its market with the Israelis in things like cement. So, it proceeded awkwardly, but the intent was wherever there was an economic or trade advantage that you could exploit successfully to the benefit of the three parties it would be good for the region, for the parties themselves and for the progress towards peace. It was taken as a given that those economies needed to relate to each other effectively and if you did that effectively, political accommodation might follow.

Q: How did the peace treaty when it was signed and details were known, how did it resonant in Jordan?

EGAN: People at the outset, there was a fair debate about it in the Jordanian parliament and there were those who felt the treaty was a mistake, particularly those within the Muslim brotherhood and in some Palestinian quarters. There was skepticism about Israeli intentions and in some cases among people who thought that the King had done it under pressure from us which was not the case. But there was no thought that his authority to do this or the authority of his government to do this could be questioned. It was approved by the parliament and I would say that most Jordanians even if they were skeptical that it would succeed and that it would be good for Jordan, said okay, let's do this. I remember many conversations with Jordanians in which they would say, all right we've taken the step. What do you think the situation is going to be like two years from now? How's it going to look three years from now? Is this really going to work? Is this really going to work on the security side? Are these trade opportunities really going to come to fruition? Will we really benefit from it? It was all in the context of the signed treaty. The agreement had been reached, let's go forward with it however skeptical some of us may be.

That was 10 years ago. The optimism has faded. Movement on many of those issues has either slowed considerably or stopped and there is no perception that the United States is really committed to putting its own credibility and resources on the line to bring the peace process to conclusion. That's a very sad and tragic development and it need not have been so.

I had been in Aqaba for several days before the actual signing was to take place. President Clinton was there, not as a signatory, but as a witness. The President was going to be coming to Aqaba from Cairo. I recall vividly several very long nights on the telephone from my hotel room in Aqaba to the party in Cairo going through all of the various details of the signing ceremony. The aspect of it that I never understood is that for whatever reason, the United States did not want a Russian representative to have any prominent role in the ceremony or even to sign as a witness and I can't tell you how many instructions I received from various authorities with the President or in Washington to try to persuade the Jordanians to make sure that he was not on the dais. He was and he signed as a witness. It happened and it was a great event.

Q: Let's talk about the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin. He was prime minister, wasn't he?

EGAN: He was prime minister.

Q: You said president before.

EGAN: No, I meant the prime minister, the president of Israel, Weizman, and Shimon Peres were all there. Rabin was prime minister.

Q: Okay. How did that, we can talk about your reactions and what happened immediately when you heard about it and then its aftermath.

EGAN: I was at a dinner at the home of the Minister of Planning, Rima Khalaf. She's now the head of the Middle East North African division of UNDP. She was one of the principal authors of the first Development in the Arab World Report that UNDP published a couple of years ago and they're going to do three of them. Rima got a phone call from the palace telling her that Rabin had just been assassinated. There were several other members of the cabinet there, there was nobody there from the royal family. I think my wife and I were the only non-Jordanians who were there. We were absolutely stunned. The King was profoundly affected because he considered Rabin a true partner in the effort to find a way towards peace. He respected him as a military man. He thought that because he was a military man he could talk with him in ways that he couldn't with either the president of Israel or Shimon Peres who was the foreign minister. King Hussein in fact didn't particularly like Shimon Peres, thought he was a professional talker. But he liked Rabin. He dealt easily and directly with Rabin, in person, on the telephone, whatever the circumstances were.

Q: They had been dealing off and on for quite some time.

EGAN: They had known each other almost their entire lives, both as enemies and as political figures and as men. It was a very real and special relationship. The fact that Rabin was the man with whom Jordan had negotiated peace, and the man to whom they would rely on for the implementation of the Israeli side of that peace treaty, and the fact that Hussein genuinely felt that he had a special relationship with Rabin and could deal with him in ways that he couldn't deal with any other Israeli political figure, particularly any other civilian political figure, made Rabin's assassination was a terrible blow. The King went to Jerusalem for the funeral, played a very prominent public role in that funeral, stayed in close touch with Rabin's widow. He wasn't politicking. These were very instinctive decisions and reactions. When Rabin was, when eventually Netanyahu became prime minister, this was a man who Hussein simply couldn't tolerate, didn't trust him, thought he was deceitful, felt he represented an element of the Israeli domestic politics that was contrary to the interests of peace and to Jordan's own stability. Whenever he could, he chose not to deal with him. When Barak became prime minister, the King felt that this was the closest he was ever going to get again to a personality like Rabin. Barak shared a military background and, at least in the early days, a military man's approach to these issues. He was eager to develop a relationship with the King. They worked fairly well together. I think had the King lived beyond February of 1999 certainly through the beginning of the second intifada in September of 2000, that his relationship with Barak would have deteriorated rapidly. Netanyahu was the prime minister when Mossad attempted to assassinate the Hamas political operative in Amman, Khalid Meshal. I think as far as the King was concerned, this was just the kind of stuff you'd expect from Netanyahu.

Q: This is tape nine, side one with Wes Egan. You were saying?

EGAN: There was never anyone who could have replaced Yitzhak Rabin in King Hussein's mind.

Q: Was that a feeling at the time, I mean was there a feeling?

EGAN: Yes, it was obvious. It was obvious. Every time you saw them together. Every time one of them would describe to you the conversation they just had with the other. Any time either one of them said to us and we're going to do this and he's going to do that, you could bank on it. It worked and the systems that flowed from those two, the civilian government, the officials, the folks on the intelligence side and the folks on the military side worked together in ways that reflected the empathy between Rabin and the King.

Q: Sitting in Amman, when Rabin was killed, was there a feeling, okay at least a great start has been made and shall continue or a feeling that you know.

EGAN: Yes.

Q: What's going to happen.

EGAN: In the King's mind and in the mind of many Jordanians, Rabin was critical to the success of that relationship and the implementation of the treaty. The first question in many Jordanians' minds was who was the killer? You can shudder to think what the repercussions had been if his assassin had been a Palestinian. Particularly a Palestinian rejectionist from Hamas or Islamic Jihad who had moved through Jordan on his way to Tel Aviv. I'm sure, I know, that for many Jordanians, including the King, one of the very first frightening questions within seconds of learning of his death was who did it and what the implications would be. There was great fear at the time that the good work that had preceded Rabin's death would unravel. They worked hard, the Jordanians worked hard on the relationships that followed because despite Rabin's death they obviously had an interest in pressing on. Things got so bad during the period when Netanyahu was Prime Minister that there were several occasions when Netanyahu would come to Amman and the King wouldn't see him. He would meet with the Crown Prince and that was it. And he wouldn't be in Amman for more than an hour.

Q: What was the feeling? Was it felt, was it Netanyahu coming from, well in the first place I think you better just for the record explain who killed Rabin and why.

EGAN: He was an extreme right wing Israeli who thought Rabin was negotiating away Israel's security, military superiority and political influence of the region. That he was negotiating away the future of Israel. As awful as it is to say, thank God it was an Israeli.

Q: Well, with Netanyahu, what were you getting from, talk during this time with your relations with our embassy in Tel Aviv, were you sharing the concerns about Netanyahu?

EGAN: Absolutely. The communication I think among the ambassadors in Tel Aviv, Cairo, Damascus and Jordan and to a lesser extent Beirut could not have been better. There was no obstacle whether I was talking to Ned Walker or Martin Indyk or Chris Ross. There was no obstacle in communications among us at all. Washington made pretty frequent use of the telephone. I've never liked it as a way to do business with the Department if for no other reason than it lends itself to unconsidered or ill-considered suggestions if not instructions and because there are no fingerprints. I know when I get, or I knew when I got a telegraphic instruction that however highly classified it might have been and however narrow and restrictive its distribution might have been that at least it had gone through some clearance process. I never had that confidence with telephones. I would not have that confidence if I had done much business by e-mail. We talked to each other a lot and of course you had several things that stitched us together, not just the substantive issues and the need to talk to all of those parties about moving those issues forward, but the constant flow of congressional delegations. The regular visits by the secretary of state, the secretary of defense and later in my time in Cairo with George Tenet, the DCI.

There were occasions in which Rabin would fly, would helicopter to Amman and the American ambassador would be on that helicopter with him and I would be on the ground with the King waiting for them and we would inevitably, not inevitably, but often there would be a first large meeting that might include Martin Indyk and myself, Dennis Ross, and Aaron Miller and the special Mideast coordinator team. Then that meeting would break down and there would be a single meeting just between the King and Rabin or between the King and Dennis and I, or Rabin and Martin and Dennis, etc. So we saw each other a lot. Also, before each of the MENA [Middle East North Africa] Summits, my counterparts in Riyadh, Cairo, Tel Aviv, Damascus, Beirut and I would come back to the States as a team and spend anywhere from 10 days to two and a half weeks meeting with the business communities or the banking communities or the big commercial investment houses in New York or wherever the audience happened to be, all over the country to say this meeting in Amman is important. We would talk about it, each of us, from a bilateral perspective, from a regional perspective and from a peace process perspective. So we were a sort of, it was called a Middle East North Africa road show and we would do this in New York, Houston, Los Angeles, Atlanta, New Haven, Boston.

We were on the road and we were advertising the benefits of private sector participation in this economic summit process. You get to know each other. Not only do you get to know each other quite well doing something like that, but your success in doing it is to a large extent dependent on how well and sympathetically you work with each other. There was probably a closer bond both personal and professional among those of us who were stationed out there as ambassadors during that period than any time I can ever remember in my previous assignments. I suspect it was rather unique. I expect that although under different circumstances in a different environment that it continues today because if your hosts are in touch with each other so intimately on these issues, you damn well better be in touch with each other yourself.

Q: Were you sharing particularly with our embassy in Tel Aviv, were you sharing a sort of the concern about Netanyahu?

EGAN: Absolutely.

Q: Where was he coming from?

EGAN: What the King's reaction was, why he felt this way, how they were going to deal with Netanyahu on this issue, how they would respond to him on this issue, what I thought we ought to be doing about the relationship with these people. It was, as I said, there was no, I said what I thought in an analytic sort of way and I had never had any hesitation telling both Washington and my counterpart in Tel Aviv what was on the King's mind and why and what I thought the right thing to do about it was. I trusted them and I worked to protect the confidential nature of those relationships. When the King spoke to me about an issue, his feeling about Netanyahu for example. There's no doubt in my mind that he had every expectation that I would share that with Washington and at least with my colleague in Tel Aviv and in Jerusalem. If he didn't want me to make them aware of that, he wouldn't have told me about that. I think we were all careful in handling those issues among those leaders and I never got burned, not once.

Q: Did you feel that Netanyahu was coming from a commitment for a greater Israel or was he a wily politician and what was sort of the feeling you were getting about him?

EGAN: You know, I only met Netanyahu personally once. That was during the Madrid peace conference in 1991. I think the context in which I met him was his role as spokesman for the Israeli delegation to Madrid. I don't have a lot of personal experience with him on which I can base my opinions of him. My opinions of him are based in large part on how the people I was closest to reacted in their relationship with him. That view on the Jordanian side was that this was a very smart, brutishly ambitious political personality who had zero interest in resolving any of the final status issues of the peace process: withdrawing from the West Bank, removing settlements, negotiating the creation and the sustained existence of the Palestinian state. That he had no hesitation about taking steps that undermined Jordan if they served his purposes and what he perceived to be the purpose of the state of Israel which is why when Mossad tried to assassinate the Hamas political operative in Amman during Netanyahu's tenure as prime minister, that kind of move didn't surprise the King or the Crown Prince or the head of Jordanian intelligence. That was to them very much in character. They did not like him. He had no redeeming grace as far as they were concerned and they did not think he was good for the state of Israel.

Q: This brings up another point. What about the team that Clinton put together particularly towards the end? As I mentioned before there was a feeling that outside observers like myself sitting there watching and hearing that the Arab specialists in the State Department or elsewhere were sort of excluded from the equation for the most part and that a team was put together very competent, but at the same time they were all Jewish or seemed to be all Jewish and so much is in the perception. If you're an Arab and all of a sudden you're facing the American team and they all are Jewish background, what are you going to think?

EGAN: One of the prime ministers of Jordan, said to me shortly after the arrival of the special Middle East coordinator, it was Dennis and Aaron Miller and I think Martin Indyk was part of that visit, possibly also Dan Kurtzer. The team arrived and we were on our way to the palace for the first of several meetings. I was walking up the stairs with the prime minister of Jordan, Sharif Zeid bin Shaker, a cousin of the King's, a man who had been a young ADC when the King returned to Amman after his father's institutionalization to become regent and eventually to assume the throne, and he asked me if there were any gentiles left in the Department of State? It was said in a light vein, but he was serious. It was one of those questions that of course I didn't have to actually answer. The fact that so many of the members of the team entrusted to conduct these discussions were Jewish was obviously noticeable to the Jordanian side. The King never said a word about it to me, but this prime minister and others did. It wasn't, it was an observation, it wasn't as if to say and don't you need to do something about that, it was an observation, but it was an observation bred of a certain I don't want to say suspicion, anxiety or sort of who are these guys really working for attitude that you sometimes come across. Whatever their personal or occasionally expressed private thoughts about that may have been, however, there was no question in their mind that this was the group the President was using and would continue to use for the conduct of those negotiations as the peace process was pushed forward. Keep in mind, this was a team that was working for a president who over time became very actively and personally involved and engaged with the process. There was no question that they spoke for the administration, not just for the Department of State, but for the administration on those issues. Whatever their other feelings might have been, they were the envoys. Over time, as issues were addressed and resolved in an atmosphere in which people were optimistic about progress, whatever their reservations might have been became a non-issue. I don't think at least in terms of my involvement with Dennis and the rest of his team, whatever the sort of musical chairs it might have been, these guys knew the issues inside out and, particularly Dennis, knew the personalities, Jordanian, Israeli and Palestinian. I don't think there's another American with the possible exception of Ed Abington when he was the consul general in Jerusalem, I don't think there is another American official who in those years spent more time with Yasser Arafat face to face on these issues than Dennis. When you get right down to it, that counts. I think they respected Dennis and his team for it. I think they knew that some issues were resolved in a way sufficiently positive for the Jordanian side that might not otherwise have been the case. They knew that that's all these guys did. Unlike the Secretary of State who had other issues on his plate, this is all these guys did and the fact that they represented an administration that was as committed as it was on policy issues and on assistance issues to the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is what determined in the end how they dealt with them.

Q: Was there concern in Jordan giving the way you were towards the end about the weakening influence of Clinton in his fight with the Republican control of congress and well the sex scandal, but I mean there were other issues, too.

EGAN: The best illustration I can give you of that was the visit of an enormous congressional delegation led by Newt Gingrich. The Jordanians handled congressional delegations extremely well. They had a lot of practice.

Q: A lot of practice, watching the Israelis and learning from the masses.

EGAN: I don't think they learned from the Israelis. There was no doubt in their mind how the system worked. Don't forget the King was a man who dealt with every president since Eisenhower. He was not a neophyte. Hussein and the people around him were instinctively gracious and civil. They knew that there is something even the most egalitarian American seems to hold in some awe with respect to royalty.

Q: Oh, yes, no doubt about it.

EGAN: Whether it's the prince of Monaco or the royal family in Riyadh. Hussein knew that perfectly well. Gingrich's delegation, I think there must have been 35 or 40 members, started in Israel for three or four days. Gingrich himself made several public statements that just drove the Jordanians wild. They were very partisan, very ideologically driven. They were unhelpful with respect to the peace process itself and what people were trying to do. He was very public and very prejudiced about it. I met him and his delegation at the Allenby Bridge and they were passed off to me by I think it was probably Martin Indyk and Ed Abington who was the CG in Jerusalem and we had this routine down very well. They'd sort of be offloaded on the Israeli side of the bridge and they'd all come across and they'd get on our bus on the Jordanian side and we did it the other way as well. Of course the Allenby Bridge is nothing to write home about. It's a little World War II fjording bridge essentially and the river itself is probably not more than 12 feet wide at that point. You don't feel like you're crossing the Mississippi there.

We got them all on the bus and I always used to use the time it took to drive from Allenby up the escarpment to Amman. That was my time to stand at the front of the bus with a microphone and tell them what I wanted to tell them and respond to whatever questions they had. It was the first time I'd ever met Newt Gingrich. He's an aggressive intellectual and he's one of these men who seems to me anyway, one of the first things he does when he meets you is make a series of decisions in his own mind about whether you are worth paying any attention to or not, whether you know what you're talking about, whether you have the strength of your convictions, whether you're important, whether you're influential, whether you can make things happen, whether you can't, whether you're a jerk, whatever. He goes through a series of little tests on you and then he makes a decision pretty quickly I think and I doubt that he changes his mind easily with respect to first impressions. We had a long discussion all the way up to the palace. It took about 45 minutes and this delegation was immediately received by the King, the Crown Prince and I think every member of the cabinet in a sumptuous conference room. Received, briefed, fed a little bit, not entertained because it was a business meeting, but given ample opportunity to respond to any question they had. The Jordanians were extremely well prepared, not just as individual ministers, but as a coordinated cabinet this is the message we want this man to take away from Amman.

As we had planned for this trip, one of the things we wanted to do, was for Newt Gingrich to visit a Palestinian refugee camp in Jordan. There are more Palestinian refugees in Jordan than anywhere else in the world including Gaza and the West Bank. A million plus in 10 UNRWA camps. We wanted, we thought it was important for the Speaker to actually get a sense of what these camps in Jordan were like. The Speaker's office and the Speaker himself wouldn't have anything to do with it. I think they felt that they would be set up, that there might be a demonstration, that there would be embarrassing questions, that it would somehow tarnish his visit. In the end that was not included in the program.

After this very comprehensive and very well done and stimulating briefing at the palace, the plan was that the entire delegation was going to move to the King's out of town residence where he would host them and their spouses for dinner. So, we're talking about 100 for dinner and a meeting as well, a small meeting with the King. As we were organizing ourselves to leave, the Crown Prince, I'm standing there talking to the Speaker, the Crown Prince and I and the Speaker are talking about something and Hassan says to the Speaker, "You know, rather than go out to my brother's place on the bus, Mr. Speaker, why don't you come with me? Let me drive you in my car. I'll take you out and we can talk a little bit more in the car."

So, the Speaker thought this was a wonderful thing to do and the Crown Prince got behind the wheel of his Land Rover and Newt Gingrich sat in the passenger seat in the front and I and the sergeant-at-arms sat in the back, just the four of us. Rather than taking the gate, I knew as soon as this started, I knew what Hassan was going to do. Rather than take the gate that would lead out to the King's residence where the dinner would be held, Hassan drove out the gate on the opposite side of the palace grounds which empties out right into the city of Amman and proceeded to drive through the oldest of the Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan, Hattin, in downtown Amman. It's a very urban part of town. The Crown Prince is talking away about the city and the population of the city and the Palestinian issue and kids are coming up to the side of the car and waving and he stops and shakes hands and talks with some shopkeepers and stuff and after about 15 minutes of this the Speaker says to me and to the Crown Prince, "Well, what part of town is this? It looks like a very poor part of town. What's this part of town called?" The Crown Prince looks at him and says, "Well, this is the oldest Palestinian refugee camp in Jordan. There are 89,000 Palestinians in this camp." The Speaker said, "Well, where's the barbed wire? Where's the gate? Where are the guards? Where's the wall?" The Crown Prince told him, "That's not what refugee camps in Jordan are like." We then had a long proper discussion of the refugee component of the Palestinian population and what goes on in this particular camp and what some of the other nine are like. And the Speaker, who was a smart guy, just sucked all this up like a sponge. We got to the King's residence, the delegation and I met with the King for an hour and then the King and Queen Noor hosted a wonderful dinner for the delegation and their wives.

Two days later when the Speaker was getting ready to leave and I was taking him back down to the Allenby Bridge and we were sitting together in the front seat, he said, "You know, maybe I should have started my first ever visit to the Middle East in Jordan rather than Israel." I said, "Mr. Speaker, maybe you're right." The Jordanians did a superb job. He was a very good and smart listener and he learned something and his delegation learned something in the process. It's just an example of how skillful the Jordanians could be. I'm never sure whether the Speaker really knew the little trick we pulled on him to get him into a refugee camp, but once there, he took full advantage of it and learned something from the experience. Jordanians knew how to deal with Americans and particularly knew how to deal with the Congress. They knew where certain authorities and power actually lay and who they needed to persuade to their views to accomplish their objectives and by and large they were pretty good at it. Take note for example that Jordan is today I think the third or fourth largest recipient of U.S. bilateral assistance in the world. This is a small, but very strategic and important country. They were declared a major non-NATO ally in the mid '90s. We provided them with a squadron of F16s. We do an enormous amount of joint military training in-country with them and as I said earlier, we had to my knowledge the second most intimate intelligence liaison relationship that I know of with any country in the world. They're very good at it and Dennis and the peace team crowd represented a part of Washington and the Jordanians understood and they dealt with it appropriately.

Q: How was Sharon viewed at that time? Was he the boogie man?

EGAN: He was not in power.

Q: He wasn't in power at the time.

EGAN: He was in disgrace living on his farm. This is the man that fell from grace at the time of Shatila and they didn't have much time for Sharon, but he wasn't a factor. He wasn't something they had to deal with.

Q: Madeleine Albright. Did she come or Warren Christopher?

EGAN: She came often. She came first when she was still the perm rep in New York. I think we knew that she was to be nominated. I don't think she'd actually been nominated as Secretary of State, but we all knew it was going to happen. She came to the region to begin to get to know some of the players and of course in our case that was principally the King and the Crown Prince and the prime minister. We hosted a dinner for her with most of the members of the Jordanian cabinet at the residence and I took her to see the prime minister. Sharif Zeid bin Shaker was one of the most gracious, debonair, suave men you would imagine. Sort of a Jordanian Maurice Chevalier. He was just wonderful. She was intrigued to meet such a man, a type I don't think she'd come across before in the Arab world. I also took her to meet the King.

It's hard to imagine two Secretaries of State more different than Warren Christopher and Madeleine Albright. Christopher was a prominent and experienced attorney and a former deputy secretary of State. He was a very low key, modest, self-effacing man, a very easy person to deal with and to get to know. Madeleine Albright had a very different background, much more political and with quite a different personality and style. Warren Christopher was always extremely well prepared. He had internalized whatever it was he had to say or wanted to get and would sit with the King and others and have a real conversation, sometimes a debate on points that we disagreed on. The King never had a scrap of paper in his hand and didn't read the papers, didn't read briefing papers. Warren Christopher to the best of my recollection, never had a piece of paper in his hand. The thing I noticed about the change between Christopher and Madeleine Albright was that when she was in that same circumstance, she always had a set of three-by-five cards and she had them in her hand and visible. Sometimes it was almost as if she was reading the card or reading the bullets on the card to the King or whoever. They found that unusual and I don't think had had much experience with that sort of obviously scripted presentation. I think it left a question in their mind as to how carefully the Secretary of State listened to how they responded and it was therefore a narrower, less free flowing, less natural feeling in those discussions. And I think it had an impact on how their relationships developed. There was no question that she was the senior member of our cabinet. There was no question that she spoke for the President. Those were not issues. Jordanians were too smart for that, but it was I think a very different, I think those questions of style made it difficult for their relationships to ever become particularly natural or warm. I don't think it had a substantive effect on what was accomplished. I think it was a factor that the Jordanian side simply kind of absorbed and dealt with and proceeded as best they can. To the best of my knowledge neither one of them ever went back to Jordan after they left office.

It's difficult for me to judge which one was more effective in Washington. The Department of State was important in the U.S.-Jordanian relationship, but not critical. They were important things in the relationship with Jordan that the Department in some cases had very little to do with and there were some good important things that happened despite the Department of State. But the Jordanians were magnanimous with the Secretaries of State because there were so many things that tied Washington and Amman together in those days.

Q: You mentioned military equipment and all that. Did that play much of a role?

EGAN: Huge. Both with respect to equipment and to training. The Jordanians had long been asking for a squadron of F16s which eventually, in I think 1997 we finally found a device by which we could provide them with a squadron of F16s as a no cost lease. The terms of the agreement were that after a certain period of time the aircraft title was actually transferred to Jordan. There were some costs to the Jordanians on the training side and spare parts and maintenance, that kind of stuff, but we were able to find a way to satisfy that. We ran the largest international military and education training in the world with Jordan. We trained an enormous number of Jordanians in the United States. Air force and army. An extensive schedule of port visits and two or three huge in-country joint military exercises every year, not as large as Bright Star in Egypt, but very large.

We also found a way eventually to forgive about \$700 million in official debt. This was about 10% of Jordan's entire debt burden. When I arrived in 1994 their outstanding debt was about 96% of GDP and servicing that debt was a huge drain. What a lot of people including a lot of Jordanians didn't realize is that we had to find our own budgetary resources to buy that debt back at a discounted rate, like 28 cents on the dollar or 10 cents on the dollar, whatever the figure was, you had to get it out of our budget for the purposes of treasury's books; you had to actually find the money to buy back that debt at a discounted rate and I think a lot of people in the States and in Jordan didn't realize that you can't just sign a piece of paper and say the debt's forgiven.

Q: In training, one of the things I've read about an American military man who worked with the Egyptian army and was saying a real problem in dealing with any and he used the term Arab, military is that there was not the desire to share knowledge. In other words, if you became the tank repairer for a certain type of tank you weren't as an Arab non-commissioned or even an officer, did not feel it was a good idea for your own personal advantage to train the people under you how to do this. In other words, you accumulate knowledge and this is very Arab.

EGAN: It's very Egyptian.

Q: It's very Egyptian. Did you find that with the Jordanians?

EGAN: Not particularly, but I certainly did find it with the Egyptians. There were the famous stories about spare parts in Egypt because we built a huge tank plant outside of Cairo. So, the issue of inventory of spare parts was always a big deal. You would find supply controllers, inventory controllers who a division, the quartermaster for a division would come to the inventory to the supply quartermaster's office and say, you know, I need six new tank treads or whatever it was he needed and the guy wouldn't issue them. It wasn't because he didn't have them. It's because if he gave them to that division then he wouldn't have them anymore and his stocks would be down. There was no concept that these things are only useful if they're put to work in the field. I did not, I believe we did not find that with respect to the Jordanian army forces which were much smaller and were almost entirely East Bank Jordanian, very few Palestinian-Jordanians in the armed forces. The King was a military man and his sons were all military men.

Q: Oh yes.

EGAN: There's a long history of training and education, both in the UK and in the United States. That's not characteristic of the armed forces in Egypt, but it is in Jordan. Those problems, those sort of personality, psychological issues were not a significant factor and were certainly not an obstacle to the success of our bilateral military relationship.

Q: Would you, you've talked about Clinton. Did Clinton come often?

EGAN: He came only once. He came when the treaty was signed in 1994. The King went to Washington two or three times a year, routinely two or three times a year and would meet with the President and the Secretary and the Secretary of Defense and DCI and do the rounds on the Hill. He understood the importance of maintaining those relationships. From saying he didn't know or understand President Clinton their relationship evolved dramatically to the extent that in 1998 after I had left, the King was at the Mayo Clinic desperately ill and the President called him and asked him to come to the Wye plantation to try to push the Israeli and Palestinian negotiations to the point of closure. You may remember photographs of the King in those days. He looked like a ghost. He was in the last three or four months of his life. Nobody knew that at the time. He may have known it at the time, but the rest of us didn't. When I had I can't remember whether we had talked about this before, but in the spring of 1998 I had flown back to the Mayo Clinic with the King and spent about two weeks with him in Rochester, Minnesota while he went through what we all thought was a final stage of his treatment. After that...

Q: Excuse me, what would you be doing with the King?

EGAN: I was in constant touch with Washington about his health, how he was doing and what the prognosis was and the plan was that when he finished this period of treatment and examination at the Mayo Clinic, we were then going to come to Washington for a meeting with the President and others. I would have been back in the States with him anyway. I simply came back two weeks early and was invited by him to go with him to Rochester and be there through this period. The prime minister, the foreign minister and much of the cabinet were also there. His doctors gave him essentially a clean bill of health. Their view was that he was going to be okay and he felt pretty good and he looked pretty good. He flew because he always flew. He always did the takeoffs and the landings. After their meeting the President and the King spent a little time with the press on the portico of the West Wing. After the King and his party drove off, and I found myself standing there with the President who didn't seem to be in any particular rush to go off to some other meeting. I said to him, I said, "You know Mr. President, this will probably be the last time I'm going to have the privilege of joining you in a meeting with the King because I'm leaving in July. That's the end of my assignment and I want to thank you for all the help that you have been in the course of this relationship and on issues related to the peace process over the last four and a half years." He and I wound up sitting down in the Roosevelt room completely alone for about 30 minutes talking about the King and about Jordan. It was in that conversation that he said to me that he thought the King was one of the most fascinating, interesting men he had ever met. We talked about the peace process and we talked about Jordan and the bilateral relationship. I just thought this was terrific. At the end of 30 minutes I said, thank you very much Mr. President and got up and left. He was the only person in the United States government, the only person that expressed any interest in talking to me about Jordan after almost five years of duty there. They got to know each other quite well and it was a very constructive relationship.

Q: Well, you're putting your finger on something and in a way these oral histories are quite a bit after the fact and they're not basically sponsored by the U.S. government or State Department.

EGAN: This is your disclaimer for the afternoon.

Q: No, no, but I'm saying it represents a terrible oversight in that we do not take have people who have performed in a job and then.

EGAN: Competently or otherwise.

Q: Yes. That has nothing to do with it, but it has to do with passing information on. The State Department is particularly egregious in this.

EGAN: Stu, it's the entire, I'm serious. The President is the only person in government in any agency of the executive branch who had any interest in sitting down for a short period or a long period of time and talking about Jordan. Not to sound immodest, but I was there for four and a half years during a period which some good things happened, not because of me, but because they were ready to happen. It is a puzzle why we don't do this as a matter of routine.

Q: Well, I think this is probably a good place to stop.

EGAN: Good.

Q: Wes, we will pick this up the next time. I think we have something in two days or something like that and we'll pick this up just put at the end where did you go?

EGAN: I left Jordan in July of 1998 and came back to Washington to be the Deputy Inspector General of the Department of State, the Board for International Broadcasting and what was still then ACDA. In the '80s the law was changed so that the inspector general with the Department of State could not be a Foreign Service Officer. The deputy inspector general is the senior career official in the IG office and I came back to do that job for two years in the fall of '98.

Q: Okay, we'll pick it up then.

Q: Today is the 5th of January, 2005. Wes, can you discuss this how at the time that you did it, you can, when was it '99?

EGAN: 1998.

Q: The inspector general's office worked at that time as responsibilities and how it pertained to the Foreign Service.

EGAN: The IG function was a very traditional one in State and in fact in the old days it was called S/IG meaning it was technically part of the executive office of the Secretary of State.

Q: I've done a history of the consular service and they had, they called it inspectors at large going back to 1906.

EGAN: I actually have a copy of the handwritten inspection report of the first post I ever served in which was Durban, South Africa that I think dates from 1921, but by the time I got to IG, it was a little different. Traditionally the inspector general function was an internal Department of State function and was staffed predominantly by Foreign Service Officers, active duty and retired. There were a few civil servants with expertise or a specialty in certain things that the Department felt it couldn't provide from the career service, but it was an in-house function. In the early mid 1980s there was legislation proposed by Jesse Helms who didn't feel that the Department of State was competent to inspect itself, that it could not be trusted to inspect itself to uncover malfeasance or insubordination or mal-administration on the part of the career service.

This was during the period in which I think there was a good bit of new thinking about the inspector general cadre across the executive branch. There was already a move to create a career civil service cadre of inspectors general. These two streams sort of came together in the mid 1980s. I think Bill Harrop was the last career Foreign Service IG, and Sherman Funk whose previous civilian service had been mostly in DOD with the Department of the army, was the first non-Foreign Service IG. Sherman was interviewed and vetted among many others by John Whitehead, the Deputy Secretary of State. So I was involved in the transition from Bill Harrop to Sherman Funk. Sherman, who was an enormously talented, charismatic, and slightly eccentric man, and who brought a great deal of energy and pizzazz to his IG function, I don't think really changed the nature of the inspection function all that much at the outset. Sherman also realized right away that if he was going to be effective in that job he had to have a direct and personal relationship with the Secretary of State.

The IG function in law is slightly odd because the inspector general, all of the inspectors general of the executive departments, all report both to their agency heads, and to the Congress. Inevitably this creates a certain tension. Those on the congressional side, if they're inclined to be suspicious, will suspect that the IG has been captured by the Department they're supposed to be scrutinizing. The British, by the way, call their inspectors "scrutineers."

Q: Oh, how wonderful.

EGAN: The executive departments' traditional concern is that the IG is more interested in serving the needs of the Congress or particular congressional committees and therefore is likely to be unsympathetic to the problems a particular department or its career service may have. The fact that these IGs have a double chain of command can be awkward. The basic function of the office of the Inspector General of the Department of State has not particularly changed over the years. When I came into the service, the most important part of a post inspection was whether the post was "conducting relations" effectively. There were some audit components, particularly on the consular, GSO and Admin side, but it wasn't an audit, it was essentially a conduct of relations inspection.

The conduct of relations component of the inspection function today is now only one of many. In addition you have important security and intelligence oversight components. So, it's a more complicated effort and it looks at more parts of an embassy operation in greater detail than was probably the case before. Unfortunately one of the results of that is the tendency for inspection reports to spend 30 pages on whether all the paper clips were accounted for and two pages on whether the chief of mission and his senior staff were effective in representing the United States' interests in the host country. One of the anecdotal differences between the old days and today is there was a period in which the senior inspector, who was traditionally someone who had been an ambassador at least once, would accompany the ambassador on a meeting with, for example, with the foreign minister or some other representative of the host government. He might also accompany the political counselor or a senior section head on an official call. It's hard to imagine that happening today, but because the focus of the inspection was a conduct of relations inspection, it was natural. There also used to be a reception of some sort, a social event held while the inspectors were there so that they could watch the embassy staff and team dealing with their counterparts.

Q: We were all supposed to have a party.

EGAN: A representational event.

Q: A representational event. We're all scurrying around to get our favorite people.

EGAN: To talk nice about you.

Q: Talk nice about you. When you're saying that's all gone. By the time you got there, we're talking about '98 to what?

EGAN: Late summer I was there from the summer of 1998 to the fall of 2000.

Q: This is gone. You talk about then, you're talking about.

EGAN: Before 1986. But the reason I mention those points is because it has an impact on the structure and focus and reception of the inspection function when I was there. The IG was Jackie Williams-Bridgers. She was a career IG, most of her government experience was in the GAO. She was the daughter of a Foreign Commercial Service Officer, so she was not without Foreign Service experience. When I got there there was also a second deputy. By the time I left that second deputy position had been eliminated. The second deputy position had been added a couple of years before when there were disputes about the way in which Foreign Service and civil service or non-Foreign Service people dealt with each other. They had made a decision that the audit, security, and law enforcement functions of the IG should not be entrusted to a deputy who was a Foreign Service Officer. They thought it needed to be handled by a deputy with an audit background. So, you had the IG, two deputy IGs and several assistant inspectors general for post inspections, for audit, for security, for law enforcement, and for intelligence oversight. The senior Foreign Service deputy was responsible for the inspection function and the security and intelligence oversight function. The civil service senior deputy was responsible for audit, security, and law enforcement. Quite frankly I thought this was a lousy arrangement and when the incumbent in the other deputy's job retired, the decision was made, and I felt very strongly about it, that we would go back to a single deputy.

The inspection function was staffed in such a way that each inspection team was led by a career Foreign Service Officer who had served in an ambassadorial assignment. Some of them were permanent staff, some were retirees. Each team had permanent staff who handled various aspects of the inspection whether it was the political section, or the economic section or the admin section. I returned to Washington in July of 1998. In August of 1998 the embassies in Dar es Salaam and Nairobi were bombed and I reported to work in early September. The timing had quite an impact on my next two years in that office for several reasons. The first of which was that a lot of questions were raised about how embassies were protecting themselves and their people, whether or not the security function, the physical security and personnel security function of the Department of State was being adequately managed, whether the Department of State was allocating sufficient financial resources to those functions, in fact whether the Department of State was even asking for sufficient financial resources for those functions. Of course, as is the case every time there's an incident like that, there are a fair number of people around town whose objective is to find out who you can blame.

One of the results was an enormous security supplemental for the Department of State. Several billion dollars and at least one special commission to look at embassy security overseas. Sort of like the old Inman report in the 1980s, but with a tighter focus. Even though I'd only been in the job a few weeks, it was apparent to me that the enormous infusion of funds into the Department's budget was going to have an enormous impact on how the Department then structured its priorities in this area over the next several years. But the inspector general's office as it existed at that time was not capable of making reasonable judgments as to whether the Department of State was actually using those several billion dollars effectively. That concern led to lots of discussions and a decision that I thought was probably long overdue: that the IG function had become much too fragmented. The operations of the missions overseas or elements of the Department of State at home were not being looked at in a comprehensive and integrated way. As a result, it was very difficult to pull together a coherent and useful final inspection report for the Secretary's use or the management officials of the Department of State's use or the congress' use to answer the basic question of is this mission being run effectively and are the taxpayers' funds being used appropriately?

So we altered the nature of our inspection teams. Jon Wiant, the assistant IG for security and intelligence oversight was the single most important voice driving this decision. We took the remnants of the traditional conduct of relations approach and we said anytime an embassy is getting a traditional conduct of relations inspection, the team must also include security and intelligence oversight specialists. We then created teams focused on the security and intelligence function and insisted that anytime one of those teams conducted a security and intelligence oversight inspection, it had to include career Foreign Service staff from the traditional conduct of relations function. This was an effort to take the resources of the IG and stitch them together in a way that the IG could produce a more integrated and comprehensive, and in our view therefore, more credible report. My feeling is that this worked quite well. It produced better inspections. Those inspections were more useful to post management and they were more useful to the Department and the Congress.

One other element that was the constant difficulty in dealing with was the law enforcement function of the IG. The IG has law enforcement authorities with respect to the investigation of criminal, potentially criminal activity. The IG does not prosecute, but if there is probable cause to suspect criminal activity regardless of who the perpetrator might be, it is the security and law enforcement function of the IG that does a basic investigation which is then turned over to an assistant U.S. attorney at the Justice Department. Justice then makes the final determination on whether prosecution is in order or not. When Justice decides to prosecute, the agents who work for the IG wind up working those cases very closely with the assistant U.S. attorney.

Q: I recall.

EGAN: One more point, Stu. Finally on this sort of organizational structure, when I arrived to fill the deputy slot in September of 1998, the State Department IG was then still also the IG for ACDA which in the course of the next few years went out of business, the United States Information Agency, which in the course of the next few years was integrated into the Department, and for the board of international broadcasting which runs the radios, Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty, VOA, etc.

Q: On the law enforcement I remember reading some articles in the Foreign Service Journal and all saying that people should treat the inspection corps, the inspections very carefully because this is not a matter of sharing your problems with colleagues. These are people out to get you and anything you said might be used against you and therefore, don't be too forthcoming. I mean.

EGAN: I read the same article. I think that reflects an attitude that has always existed toward the inspection corps, but it seems more prominent today than when I came into the Service, in part perhaps because so many other functions have accrued to the IG like the audit and investigatory responsibilities. I think a good inspection team that's well led and that is disciplined can overcome that attitude. Not all of them are successful in doing that. There are good inspectors and there are lousy inspectors. There are auditors that can live in your office for a week and a half and become a tremendous asset to you and there are auditors who will use that time to find any scab they can and make it bleed and who approach the process in a very confrontational way.

I think one of the most difficult jobs for the IG staff is to construct the inspection teams in such a way that they minimize that reaction and attitude at post and work together effectively as a team regardless of what their specialties or career status may be. There are no doubt people who have been on the wrong end of a badly handled investigation. There's nothing worse than feeling that your life has been ripped open by some one with an ax to grind. Even if the case is dropped, you feel violated.

Q: This is tape ten, side one with Wes Egan. You were saying that the fact that there is an investigation becomes known.

EGAN: Can become known.

Q: Can become known.

EGAN: Maintaining the confidentiality of the investigative process is a real challenge. I remember in Zambia in 1979, I was the DCM. We were being inspected. As far as I was concerned the number two guy on the inspection team was a failed and embittered FSO. For whatever reason he went after my admin officer and GSO very aggressively, to the point where he tried to issue them instructions on how to do their job at that embassy. I was a 30 year old DCM and I called the senior inspector in, a distinguished, retired former ambassador and I said, "You straighten out your number two or I'm going to throw him out of the country. If I have to, will send all of you home." This man said to me, "Wes, I'm just a wall flower on this team. This is not a conduct of relations inspection. This is an audit and I've got a lousy crowd and there's nothing I can do about it." I said, "Well, if you can't do anything about it, then you shouldn't be here either." I was really cheeky for a young FSO. But you know, inspectors are not there to run the post. That kind of stuff happens. This was when it was still essentially an in-house function. You have to admit, too, there are those of us who do some really stupid things in our business and some of us are ripe for investigation. It happens.

Q: Oh yes. I was interviewing somebody who said he arrived at his first post at Brasilia and he was taken at hand, he was going to be the chief of the only officer doing the consular section and the guy there shortly thereafter was kicked out of the Service for malfeasance and it was very obvious he was talking about the deals that could be made there. I remember the time when if you were down the line a bit you kind of looked forward to inspections because you could look upon the inspectors as sort of career counselors or if you had a problem within the structure, you felt oh, here's somebody on whose shoulder you could cry a little.

EGAN: I think that was true then and I think it still happens today. As I said, I have seen inspection teams do this work brilliantly. I've seen teams that as a team and as individuals were enormously effective. That still happens. When the system works the way it should, it ought to happen. That's what the process is supposed to do, but there are also times when it doesn't and it becomes acrimonious, confrontational, messy, nasty. When that happens, its almost impossible to extract from that a quality inspection report.

Q: Tell me, you've mentioned a number of times the intelligence inspection and I don't want to tread on classified waters, but what do you mean by that?

EGAN: After I retired, I was asked to spend a couple of hours with newly appointed career and non-career ambassadors, every six months or so. I was asked to describe and discuss with them what they needed to be thinking about with respect to their statutory obligations for the management of intelligence activities at their post. It always used to surprise me the number of them, including career FSOs, who didn't understand that ambassadors have a unique and statutory responsibility for the oversight of all intelligence functions in their country of assignment. It cannot be delegated. It cannot be delegated to the DCM or anybody else. There are certain statutory obligations an ambassador has on the law enforcement side that he can delegate to a DCM, but the statutory responsibility for the oversight of intelligence activities, an ambassador may not delegate. Meaning that with respect to any overt or covert activity of the intelligence activity, if it's a brilliant success, they can take some of that credit, if it's a miserable failure the egg is on their face just as well as their COS and the DCI. So, there was an intelligence oversight function, a very discreet, specific function of the IG's operation that looked at how effectively individual ambassadors managed that oversight responsibility.

Q: Now, getting to.

EGAN: Also, sorry to interrupt, also it meant that we had full time and part time intelligence officers on the staff.

Q: Yes. Well, now, getting to some case, not case, but particulars, what about dealing with political appointee ambassadors? They run the gamut as well as regular Foreign Service type ambassadors. We've got some lousy Foreign Service ambassadors, but political appointees often come with a different attitude and they're harder to treat with I would think if they're chasing some girls around their desk or something. Regular Foreign Service Officer ambassador would be gotten rid of rather quickly, but tell me about the political appointee.

EGAN: I'll give you two examples.

Q: Okay.

EGAN: One involved, both of these were Schedule Cs.

Q: Schedule Cs being?

EGAN: Political appointees, not career officers. One was appointed ambassador to Romania and one was appointed ambassador to France. One was a little bit more high powered than the other. Before I go any further, I should say there is a view sometimes that IGs are going to give political appointees an easier time. The ambassador to Romania was a political appointee. Within a month or two of his arrival at post all sorts of smoke signals started coming out of Bucharest: inappropriate use of funds, inappropriate use of staff, violations of confidentiality with respect to discussions with Romanian officials or Romanian private citizens, some questionable interpersonal relationships, terrible problems in the relationship with the AID officer, etc. All kinds of noise.

We put together an inspection team led by a very senior retired ambassador to go to Bucharest and take a hard look at this place.

Q: Excuse me, how would the smoke signals come to your attention?

EGAN: We began to hear from the geographic bureau and USAID in Washington. There's also a privacy channel to the IG.

Q: Open forum?

EGAN: No, this is just to the IG. We put together a very experienced inspection team led by a very senior and distinguished former ambassador and they went to post and produced an extremely well documented and scathing review of the mission, but in particular the ambassador's performance. Traditionally a team will send back to the IG front office a summary draft of findings while they're still at post. Then when the team comes back they, the team leader, I always used to insist that the senior inspector and perhaps and in some occasions his deputy depending on the size of the team and the size of the embassy would sit down with the inspector general and me for an hour or so and go over the principle findings, positive and negative. Also, we might discuss their thoughts on what the principle recommendations should be.

This team came back, the senior inspector briefed the IG and me and the IG was appalled. I was a little nervous about what this report was going to look like. This non-career appointment was not without political connections. No sooner had the inspectors returned, than the ambassador at post sent in his own multipage critique on the inspection team and their findings. In the end we produced a transparent and extremely critical review of the ambassador's performance. We briefed the director general and the undersecretary for political affairs on it before it was actually published. We also briefed the head of presidential personnel in the White House. The man was gone from post within six or seven months.

The other extreme during this period was the ambassador to France. He faced budget cuts that were forcing him to close several consulates. In response, he came up with the idea of creating something called SEPs, special embassy posts. He argued that if he had to close Bordeaux, with a staff of three Americans and 15 locals and a budget of \$5 million a year, this embassy still needs somebody in Bordeaux who could keep him in touch with what's going on there. He proposed creating a special embassy post of one American working out of a small office with no more than one or two staff to focus not on everything in the world, but to focus on those issues that make the environment of that constituent post unique and important. Whether its Bordeaux, or Brest, or Marseilles or whatever. Minimal cost to the government, great experience for middle grade officers and an invaluable source of reporting. Well, the Department of State was totally against this. But we thought it was a great idea. Pat Kennedy who was the Assistant Secretary for Administration at the time, asked the IG to do an evaluation of the ambassador's proposal. Our evaluation was that this was a concept with real merit. They actually opened one while I was still in the IG and we sent a one or two person team to inspect it and thought it was doing brilliantly, much to the chagrin of the Department.

Two extremes one political appointee who was a serious problem and one political appointee who had a brilliant idea that the bureaucracy just couldn't deal with. I think we treated both of those individuals very fairly. I think corrective action was taken in both cases. One in the first case eventual departure of the ambassador. An ambassador who by the way was telling everybody that he would be reappointed in the same position or a bigger one in the next administration and of course he disappeared from view completely. Another ambassador who had a smart idea that the system had trouble accepting and that I think we played a small part in helping bring to fruition.

Q: One of the things that in the structure the inspector general the new system was put in place by somebody who, by Jesse Helms and company, who is not a friend of the Foreign Service.

EGAN: Yes.

Q: Well, the piece of legislation and in many ways it made sense. The point being, I'm thinking of the reporting to congress because there are plenty within congress who are looking for dirt. I mean anything you can have, so you have a democratic appointee who was kicked out of Romania you can see the Republicans latching onto this. You can reverse the Democrats for Republicans or however it is or just saying you know, they found mismanagement by Foreign Service people in Zimbabwe or what have you. What about that relationship?

EGAN: We tried, I mean we spent a lot of time discouraging fishing expeditions or allowing ourselves to be sucked into fishing expeditions, but if either a member or committee staff or committee came to us and said they have evidence that X is taking place either in the Department in Washington or the board of international broadcasting or a diplomatic or consular mission overseas, we would look at it. If we agreed that there was something there after a preliminary examination, we would pursue it in whatever channel was most appropriate. More often than not, of course, these things were of an investigatory law enforcement nature, not he's a lousy political officer.

Q: Selling visas.

EGAN: A consular officer who is selling visas. It tended to involve mostly not exclusively, for the most part the security of law enforcement component of the IG. We would take a look at it and if we didn't think there was anything there, we would go back to the source and say we'd taken a look at this for you and there's nothing there. If it didn't smell right to us, then we would take the next step and open an investigation and pursue it as such using those tools of the IG. If it went criminal, it moved from us to the Department of Justice. If it was something that the Department could remedy, administratively or through the assignments process or through disciplinary action, the Department has a formal system of disciplinary action that can range from suspension of pay for 30 days to official letters of reprimand to termination. If it took that direction we would pursue it with the Department. I would have to say that most of the time, if a member or senior committee or personal staff of a member brought something to our attention almost inevitably there was something. It may not have been felonious, it may just have been bad judgment, but it was rare when there was absolutely nothing.

I recall only one case in which the allegations were, in fact, groundless. The question came up from the Hill, from the committee staff, alleging that the spouse of an ambassadorial nominee had accepted inappropriate gifts from a foreign government. We took a look at it. We exonerated the spouse, but the nomination never went forward. We wrote to the committee exonerating the spouse and the committee had no interest in any wider dissemination of our findings. The nominee came to us and asked for a copy of the letter exonerating her spouse. The IG refused. I wrote to the spouse officially as the deputy. In effect as I recall I said although I am prohibited from giving you what the IG considers a private communication between the inspector general and the committee, here's what it says. This was a superb officer who became so frustrated by this process and the nervousness on the part of the White House and former colleagues at State it took the wind out of the sails of the nomination that the officer eventually got so frustrated she resigned. One of the horrible things about the ambassadorial nomination process, in my experience, is that when a nomination runs into trouble, when a career officer's nomination runs into trouble, there is a shocking tendency on the part of that person's Foreign Service colleagues to back away. Not many people go to bat for those of us who run into such problems. I think it's something the Foreign Service ought to be ashamed of.

Q: What about you know one of the charges you hear these things and I like to have somebody who was around to comment on them. I've had people say, oh, yes, so and so was absolutely a terrible officer. He was a junior officer, but he or she stays in the Service because he or she is a minority and everything is given a poor efficiency report or saying they're just not pulling their weight or whatever the problem is, they make a complaint that its discrimination. I've seen them 20 years later still hanging around the corridors.

EGAN: The cases sometimes move very slowly.

Q: Yes, I mean, did you find I mean in other words, was discrimination sort of the weapon of resort of those who were found lacking? I mean the charge of discrimination in response to a or not. Did you notice anything of that nature?

EGAN: No, because you know the IG has no role in the grievance process. No role in the assignments process. It does have an oversight role with respect to EEO, but that's less in terms of individual cases than whether the EEO function is being properly managed in the Department, which of course by implication includes the question you have raised as to whether or not charges of this sort are legitimate. The IG itself only gets involved, would only get involved in an issue like that in the context of some overarching managerial or EEO concern. I don't honestly recall a single case or issue in my two years in the IG that revolved around either racial or gender or age or disability discrimination issues.

Q: How did Madeleine Albright relate to the inspection process?

EGAN: Not at all.

Q: Okay, well, I was going to say, did you find, I mean I realize you were in one branch of the State Department, but still an important branch and just to get a feel for her, within the ministry of apparatus.

EGAN: For an inspector general of any executive department to do the job properly, and to do the job the way the congress intends, the IG must have an open, regular, straightforward relationship with the agency head. There should never be any question of access. The other side of that is that Secretaries of State need to understand what a potentially constructive tool an IG is and should make it their business to insure that the IG has that sort of a relationship and that the Secretary's senior staff and the rest of the building on the management side understands that. The IG that I worked for and the Secretary of State at the time did not have that relationship. She had some contact with the Secretary's senior staff, the executive assistant for example, but I cannot recall a single instance in my two years there when the IG met with even the deputy secretary. The Director General was usually the best she could do. I mean no disrespect to the importance and the position of the director general, but it's not an acceptable substitute for a relationship with the Secretary of State. That doesn't mean that the IG ought to be traipsing in and out of the Secretary's office every two or three days, but when he or she needs the access they ought to have it as a matter of routine and the Secretary ought to want that access to exist and should even occasionally say to an IG, "anything I need to know about what's going on before it comes back and bites me" for all of the obvious reasons in a town like Washington. In the two years from 1998 to 2000 that I was in the deputy's job in the IG it didn't happen.

There are two other aspects that I thought were difficult during that period or rather one that was difficult and one that worked the way it should. We regularly tried to recruit consular and diplomatic security staff for two-year tours in the IG office. We would tell DS we wanted their people to bid on security inspector positions and in the course of that two, three or four year tour, the DS officer would see more posts than he would ever see working in DS. He'll get his fingers deeper into the function at overseas missions and he'll come back to you as a better more worldly more experienced officer. We can sharpen, we can make this tool you've already got even sharper. We would say the same thing to the assistant secretary for consular affairs. Give us your best and brightest that we can integrate into our inspection teams to look at the consular function and when they come back to you, after a regular assignment, you'll have a better officer than what you gave us. The bureau of consular affairs, specifically Mary Ryan who was the assistant secretary at the time, understood and agreed instantly and we used to get superb consular officers for rotational tours through the IG. The bureau of diplomatic security had a completely opposite view of it. I don't think it was so much from the assistant secretary or from the senior DAS as much as I think it was from the rank and file.

Q: The culture.

EGAN: The culture within DS, that an assignment for a DS officer in the IG was the kiss of death. Forget it if you ever expect to come back to the bureau and be taken care of. That was no favor to the Department of State or to the IG. The inspector general had extremely good relations with the assistant secretary and the senior deputy in DS in those days. Extremely good. I did as well. We both had a very similar relationship with the assistant secretary for consular affairs, but we could not get diplomatic security to give us good people as a matter of policy and routine.

Q: I would think that in the inspection process in the term of the gotcha in other words, catching somebody, now, really, there are three vulnerable spots. One is the consular side, one is administrative side and the other is the ambassador. The ambassador being asking for things that he or she shouldn't get. Forget about that, but on the administrative and the consular side, they're both handling commodities.

EGAN: And money.

Q: And money or power.

EGAN: Both.

Q: Being the visa business, which can generate money. Did you see any pattern or something because one of the things that I've always been astounded at, I come from the old consular corps basically, is every once in a while you find in particularly younger officers getting involved in big passport, big visa selling things. Did you feel the young officers are more vulnerable, a change in attitude or maybe they weren't catching them in my day and we didn't know about it.

EGAN: Well, I think most crooks start young. I think I would add a third category to the ones you mentioned. I would add particularly these days, I would add the security function, the RSO function with respect not so much to money, but with respect to responsibility, culpability and the tendency of the system to try to point fingers and find a scapegoat when something dreadful happens. Certainly on the construction side, there is an enormous amount of money, but that's not usually an RSO's thing. I think on the consular and the admin side and when we say the admin side, we're really talking mostly I think about GSO and budget and fiscal. They bring together, both those functions bring together two elements which in combination are often quite volatile, money and influence. Who gets the visa and who gets the contract? Who gets the passport when? Which vendor is chosen, etc. I don't know of a culture or a government bureaucracy in which there are going to be people who can't resist those temptations. I don't think there is anything particularly structural about it and I don't think there are any particular patterns except there are good officers and there are bad officers. I think when you consider the number of people involved, visas issued, contracts let, funds spent, that is a small problem. It doesn't mean that it's not a problem. It is a small problem, but it sure gets, it sure makes for good headlines.

Q: Yes.

EGAN: Headlines that are usually pretty short-lived, but I don't think there's any, I've never had any sense that there is something about the way in which those functions are structured or broadly speaking staffed that creates a systemic vulnerability other than the volatile mixture of money and influence.

Q: Did you have a feeling that the system could respond relatively well for people who maybe were not the big crooks, but just basically incompetent in whatever they were doing or terribly poor judgment, really they shouldn't be doing the work of the government abroad or within the Department. Did you feel the structure was such that it could get rid of these people?

EGAN: I succeeded in firing an employee of the IG. A civil service employee of the IG, which I was told, was impossible. It took me two years, but that person wound up on the street. I think part of the problem in the system is the sort of cyclical and rotational nature of the Service. If you're going to be in the job for three years, chances are there are battles you're going to wage and battles you're not going to wage. If you have absorbed, if you have the impression that taking action against someone who you believe is incompetent, not criminal, just incompetent, if your perception of the environment is such that it's going to be very difficult and acrimonious, it's going to sour, I mean you sit across the table from this person everyday. You've got to work with this person and it's going to take 18 months of the next two years. You may say oh, we'll get along. It's like efficiency reports. I mean how often have you seen an efficiency report that was extremely critical to the point of saying this officer should not be in government service? Rarely, I would expect. Efficiency reports have gotten to the point where they're written by formula, in code, they're ghastly things to have to do, but the same logic seems to apply. I'll give this guy. I'll be a little bit critical, but I won't actually take those steps that perhaps a responsible person in my position ought to take if I really thought this person was bad for government service. A lot of people, to be cynical for a moment, perhaps most of us hesitate before taking step like that. If it is criminal activity, that's different. I think most Foreign Service Officers who bump up against that sort of thing tend to be very quick to take whatever steps are appropriate to see that that is brought to light and that some sort of action is taken. But short of that, just because the person's a jerk or not up to what you think should be the Service's standards, I haven't seen a lot of cases of people devoting themselves to getting those individuals out of the Service. If you know that two and a half years from now you're going to be reassigned and you can leave it for the other guy, well. How many times do we arrive at a post and inherit the most ghastly problems and you say to yourself, why did my predecessor not do something about this? There will be a few times your own successor will say the same thing about you.

Q: Wes, is there anything else we should cover in this particular period? Well, you can always add, you know, when you look at this thing when you get the transcription.

EGAN: I'll add only one thing. I had seriously considered retiring when my assignment to Jordan was finished in 1998. I didn't think I would ever again have such a good assignment. I was back at the Mayo Clinic with King Hussein in the spring of 1998 and came back to my hotel room to find a phone message from the inspector general of the Foreign Service who I had never met. The message was from her secretary and the secretary had said that the inspector general would like to talk to me on the phone, please return the call. I had the reaction I think most Foreign Service Officers have when you get a message, like that. I've only been away from post for two weeks, what's happened? What have I done? What has somebody at the embassy done, was my first reaction. So, with some trepidation I returned the call and the IG introduced herself and said, "Look I'm looking for a senior deputy and you have been recommended to me and if you're interested I'd like to talk to you about that possibility and are you going to be in Washington anytime soon?" I met her after the King's visit to Washington was over, she offered me the job, and I went back to post and thought about it. The more I thought about it, in the context of being sort of ready to retire anyway, and having done a few calculations about the advantages of retiring in Washington rather than retiring in the field given the way your annuity is calculated, I called her back and accepted. I felt I had had a very full and rewarding career. I had enjoyed the Foreign Service. I'd been really lucky and had had the chance to work with some terrific people, and I'd learned a lot, and I'd seen parts of the world I would have never seen otherwise, and I met and had dealings with people that I would never have had otherwise from presidents, kings and prime ministers to farm workers in rural Zambia. It was fascinating. I thought maybe I could give something back to the Service by helping with the inspection function for the last couple of years of my service. It didn't quite turn out that way. I found the Washington environment tedious. I found the inspection function more contentious than I thought it needed to be. I found the process that eventually produced the final written inspection report vulnerable to micromanagement including my own which I didn't like. I was disappointed in the fractious nature of the foreign affairs community that you saw from that perspective and to some extent people's attitudes towards me, the attitudes of Foreign Service colleagues towards me may have even changed slightly when I was the deputy IG just because of the job. Where that was the case it passed quickly, but it is a sign of a sort of depth of the institutional anxiety about the role of the IG. I was very, very ready to retire in the fall of 2000. Even if I had been able to stay in the Foreign Service, if my time in class had not run out, I don't think I would have.

Q: Well, just briefly, what have you done since?

EGAN: Anything I feel like. That's my glib answer to people. The only thing I've done on the government service side is you remember in October of 2002 the executive officer of the USAID mission in Amman was murdered.

Q: Yes.

EGAN: Larry Foley. Secretary Powell asked if I would chair the accountability review board to investigate his murder.

Q: This was dealing with security of embassies.

EGAN: Right.

Q: Security of Foreign Service.

EGAN: The Inman report prompted legislation that created accountability review boards. Any time an American official dies under suspicious circumstances, meaning not an automobile accident, the Secretary is required to make a determination whether the circumstances are such that an accountability review board should be convened to see if the death was related to the person's official status, if any American official either might be culpable or potentially responsible in that death, or whether there is anything institutional or structural that might have contributed to that individual's death. The Secretary has the option of either convening such a board or not. In the case of Larry Foley's death he convened one. This was only the 10th time since that legislation was passed in the mid '80s that an accountability review board had been convened. The one that immediately preceded mine was the one that Admiral Crowe led to investigate the attacks on the embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam. I was given a mandate, sufficient budget, offices in the Department of State, and a professional staff of seven. One of whom is chosen and appointed by the director of central intelligence. The other six are selected by the Department. I had 60 days to investigate his death and to make my report and recommendations to the Secretary. The legislation requires that that report go directly to the Secretary who must inform the congress, specifically the Speaker of the House, within 30 days of what action he intends to take based on the board's findings and recommendations. I did that from January to March of 2003.

I continued to brief new ambassadors on their intelligence responsibilities for the first two years, but then that whole ambassadorial seminar, which Tony Motley, Shirley Temple Black, and Shelton Kryss had run for 25 years, was very abruptly scrapped. It doesn't exist anymore. The entire function of the seminar to prepare first time ambassadors, career and non-career, for their postings has in some way that I don't quite understand been absorbed by FSI. When that happened my briefing function for them, for those new ambassadors in fulfilling the intelligence responsibilities, fell away. Other than that, I'm a member of the board of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training. I'm a member of the board of the Washington Institute of Foreign Affairs and the chairman of its membership committee and I allowed myself to be talked into founding and heading a non-profit foundation in Washington dedicated to the protection and preservation of Petra in southern Jordan. It's called the Petra National Foundation. Contributions would be gratefully accepted.

Q: Well, Wes, this has been fun.

EGAN: I hope it's been useful.

Q: Well, it's been very useful.

EGAN: Or interesting at least.

Q: I have to agree with you that every, at the time you did it, the length you did it in Jordan nothing would have substituted for that because you know.

EGAN: Nothing that I was likely to be asked to do.

Q: Yes, you could have been offered Uganda or something, but you know, it wouldn't be the same.

EGAN: Well, on the other aspect, too, was that I had a sort of distorted career pattern. I spent most of my 30-year career overseas, which is unusual and more and more unusual everyday I think. My two Washington assignments were both on the 7th floor, in the office of the Secretary and of the deputy secretary. I never worked in a geographic bureau. I had never worked in an office below the 7th floor and I wasn't particularly eager to. My career was great fun. It was the right decision for me.

Q: Well, I thank you.

End of interview